

# 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, 29 IONAWR 2018  
MONDAY, 29 JANUARY 2018

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

10.00 – 12.10

### **60% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennolyn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CHAIR	Councillor D E Williams
IS-GADEIRYDD/DEPUTY CHAIR:	
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: K Curry, J Curtice, L Frayling, P James, R Lewis, K Madge, G Walker, J Warman
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	T Hennegan, A Llewelyn, G Tanner, T Van-Rees
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	D Daycock, R Quin, R Thomas, K Jones, I Cray, M Harries, S Jenkins, C Flannery, C Jackson, K Davies, S Mansbridge, R Rees-Evans (observer), H Pugh (Carmarthenshire County Council), R Hemingway (Carmarthenshire County Council)

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Hennegan, A Llewelyn, G Tanner and T Van-Rees.

## **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**

Members were reminded that a presentation on the Rescue 365 Community Interest Company would be provided on conclusion of the meeting.

Members of the Annual Improvement Planning Member Working Group were reminded that a meeting was scheduled to be convened at 14:30hrs in the Caer Suite.

The Chair referred to the Fire Authority visit to the Joint Public Service Centre on Monday 22 January 2018. It was reported that whilst Members' attendance had been much less than anticipated, those who had attended found the visit to be worthwhile and commented that the Joint Centre provided an excellent model of partnership working enabling a number of strategic benefits to be derived from the collaboration, including interoperability, improvements in the co-ordinated response to incidents and data-intelligence sharing. In response to a query raised by Councillor James, the Corporate Head of Resources confirmed that calls to the Service's main non-emergency switchboard number was chargeable at a local rate.

## **4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2017**

The minutes of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23 October 2017 were confirmed as a true record of proceedings.

### **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor James requested that all Committee meeting minutes specify names of Members making specific comments and enquiries as a means of documenting the participation and contribution of those individuals.

Page 2, Paragraph 3 – In response to a query from Councillor Rees-Evans, the Temporary Director of Resources confirmed that the £100k disparity specified within the Draft Statement of Accounts 2015/16 was attributable to a coding issue, and therefore would not be included on the debtors section of the final version of the Statement of Accounts.

## **5 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE JOINT PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRE PROJECT (JPSCP) – CAPITAL BUILD COSTS**

The Temporary Director of Resources (TDoR) presented the report on the capital costs associated with the build of the Joint Public Service Centre to Members, following a request made by the Committee at its last meeting on 23 October 2017.

The TDoR reported that the project had met its service delivery objective by going live at Bridgend in October 2017. Members were reminded of relevant background information relating to the financial and governance arrangements for the project, which formed part of the business case agreed by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 24 March 2014.

The TDoR drew Members' attention to the building costs outlined in sections 3.5 – 3.11 of the report and highlighted that following South Wales Police's successful bid for Police Innovation Funding, there had been an amendment to the accommodation element of the project in order to fully integrate the Joint Fire Control Team within the facility. Members were however assured that the contribution from the Fire and Rescue Services remained unchanged at a combined total capped cost of £1.6m and would not be affected by any overrun of costs associated with the larger Police project.

Consideration was given to the costs associated with the refurbishment which were set out at Appendix 1 of the report and Members were informed that it was understood that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service would be releasing its £800k share of the costs imminently.

Councillor James expressed his gratitude for the clarification received by way of the report as there had been some confusion at the previous meeting which had raised Members' concerns. It was also suggested by Councillor James that the report approval process should be strengthened in future. The TDoR duly noted Councillor P James' comments.

### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.***

## **6 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRESS REPORT – QUARTER 3 2017/18**

The Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer (T/DCFO) presented the Performance and Improvement Progress Report – Quarter 3 2017/18.

Members were provided with a detailed analysis of progress made on Performance Indicators for the reporting period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 – 31 December 2017 in respect of the number of fire incidents attended, false alarms, hoax calls received, road traffic collisions, flooding, medical response and fire deaths and injuries. The T/DCFO addressed a number of Member queries, as follows:

An overview of the initiatives undertaken by the Service's Arson Reduction Team was provided to Members as a means of addressing the projected increase in deliberate fires. Committee acknowledged the array of partnership working in this area, including the Joint Arson Group, Dawns Glaw project and ongoing liaison with other Fire and Rescue Services and the Welsh Government.

In response to comments made by Councillor James, it was confirmed that the Service had robust procedures in place for dealing with Automatic Fire Alarms whereby the Service responded on a risk basis. Members were provided with an overview of the proactive preventative measures implemented within Universities as a means of educating students, as well as initiatives for liaising with businesses to encourage better management of alarm actuation processes, including the introduction of the 'investigation scheme', all of which had significantly reduced the number of call outs for the Service. Councillor James outlined the processes in place for responding to alarm actuations within Aberystwyth University and it was commented that contacting call centres to confirm a false alarm within the timeframe specified, could be somewhat challenging and had resulted in a number of unnecessary attendance by the Fire and Rescue Service.

A discussion ensued on Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) whereby the Committee raised concerns that the Welsh Government's aspirations to reduce the number of RTCs were not being realised.

The Corporate Head of Prevention and Protection provided the Committee with an overview of the array of education, support and intervention strategies implemented by the Service and Members were pleased to note the imminent establishment of the 'Fatal Review Board' which would provide a consolidated approach to road safety.

The Committee expressed the view that overall responsibility for road safety should lie with a single agency and a request was made by Councillor K Madge that the issue of Road Safety be raised at Public Service Boards as a means of addressing the issue of road traffic collisions and identifying more efficient ways of working.

Members' attention was drawn to Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the report, whereby the T/DCFO provided Committee with a synopsis of progress made against each of the Authority's 12 improvement objectives, together with an explanation of how each objective enabled the Service to meet its strategic priorities and contributed to meeting the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Members were pleased to note that significant progress had been made within the majority of improvement objectives, 10 of which had been allocated green status, 1 amber status and 1 red status.

Members' attention was also drawn to the Emergency Services Network (ESN) objective which would provide an innovative and unique solution to the provision of emergency service communications in the United Kingdom. The Corporate Head of Resources reported that the programme timetable was being revised and it was

envisaged that implementation of the first element of the project would be postponed until 2021 at the earliest. The Temporary Director of Resources explained that the delays in the ESN implementation had resulted in a projected overspend of £160k for the Airwave grant, due to an increase in costs at a National level which no longer covered the costs to the Authority.

Councillor James referred to Objective 7 and enquired whether the Service could procure an additional High Volume Pump (HVP) to enhance its response to flooding incidents. The T/DCFO clarified that the HVP appliances were strategically placed across Wales as part of a National Resilience Programme. The Temporary Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement further explained that the Service was currently exploring the feasibility of introducing a compact appliance with enhanced water capabilities along with additional 'water sleds', all of which formed part of the Service's review into the provision of water and the challenges faced by lower water pressures.

The T/DCFO provided an overview of Objectives 11 and 12 whereby the extended use of advanced information and communication technologies would improve business processes and secure operating efficiencies. Members commended the Service's innovative approach to the use of technology which aimed to ensure that its equipment, practices and processes provided operational personnel and the communities served with the best possible levels of safety and protection.

Committee Members were provided with a synopsis of the progress made against the Service's corporate projects for Safe, Well and Independent Living (SWAIL), Northern Workshops, Integrated Software Platform, On-Call, Breathing Apparatus and the Compact Appliance, as set out in Part 3 of Appendix 1 of the report.

Finally, reference was made to the Compact Appliance project whereby Councillor Walker suggested that the relevant appliance should be located at Swansea West Fire Station due to the accessibility issues within the surrounding area. It was explained to Members that the appliance was being trialled at stations with a higher level of activity, including Tenby and Morriston, in order to test its firefighting capability. The T/ACFO further informed Members that the trial would inform the Service's vehicle disposition strategy to ensure that resources were matched to risk.

## ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee note the report and progress made to date.***

### **7 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BUSINESS RISK REGISTER UPDATE REPORT TO JANUARY 2018**

The T/ACFO presented the Business Risk Update Report to January 2018 to the Committee.

Members were referred to the Business Risk Register Overview set out at Appendix A, Risk Assessment Matrix for Risk Register at Appendix B, the Business Risk Register Decision Log set out at Appendix C and the eight identified risks set out therein.

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. It was noted that Industrial Relations had been categorised as high risk, that 6 areas relating to Regulatory Body Compliance, Change/Risk Management, Business Continuity/Interruption, Attendance Management Procurement and Security had been categorised as medium risk, and that 1 area relating to Road Risk had been allocated as low risk.

In response to a suggestion made by Councillor James to increase the security risk rating to 'medium/high', the Committee was provided with an overview of the collective determination of the Business Risk Management Group which took cognisance of the Service's security arrangements, including provision of security awareness training, reported security events, outcomes from recent security audits and an increase in the UK terror threat level.

### **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee note the report and acknowledge the ongoing progress to both identify and manage matters of business risk affecting the Service.***

## **8 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON VAT OPPORTUNITY COSTS**

The Temporary Director of Resources (TDoR) presented a report on VAT opportunity costs to Members which had been provided at the request of the Committee at its previous meeting to detail the financial information associated with the Service's recovery of VAT during 2016/17.

The Committee was reminded that the issue of outstanding VAT claims for the period 2013-16 had been identified during the latter part of 2016 and that Service Officers worked with HMRC and Wales Audit Office (WAO) to rectify the position as soon as was practicably possible. It was confirmed that the matter was addressed during the final quarter of 2016/17 whereby the Service submitted several successful claims to HMRC. Furthermore, an Action Plan was implemented for the Finance Department in order to minimise single points of failure and provide greater resilience across the team to ensure that such a situation did not recur.

The TDoR confirmed that the services of VAT experts had been commissioned at a cost of £22,589 to assist with the final assessment and presentation of claims prior to submission to HMRC. It was reported that continuation of the services of external tax specialists to assist with various taxation matters would amount to a nominal charge of £3,500 +VAT per annum.

Furthermore, the Committee was reminded that the loss of interest incurred had the VAT money been claimed in a timely manner amounted to £5k-£6k per annum (£15k-£18k in total) and that this matter had already been reported to Committee on the 31 October 2016. All other costs were associated with employee time, in dealing with the extrapolation of data and coding issues, and did not present additional costs for the Service and was contained within existing revenue salary budget allocations.

Councillor James raised concerns, which were echoed by a number of other Members, that the issue did not appear to have been identified by the Service's external auditors at that time. Ms H Pugh referred to the internal control measures within WAO which entailed services of external auditors as a means of providing quality assurance to the work undertaken. The TDoR assured Committee that an investigation of the matter was currently being undertaken, the outcome of which would be reported to Members in due course. In response to a query from Councillor Madge, the TDoR confirmed that he understood that the cost of the investigation would be met by the Wales Audit Office.

### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.***

## **9 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE NATIONAL RESILIENCE YEAR 2 ASSURANCE EXERCISE**

The T/DCFO presented a verbal update on the National Resilience Year 2 Assurance Exercise to Members. It was explained that the assurance process had been developed to ensure that Fire and Rescue Services in receipt of National Resilience assets demonstrated an ability to achieve and maintain an efficient, robust and effective operational capability in order to respond to national and major emergencies.

It was reported that the year two assurance consisted of a number of practical exercises and scenarios which covered all required skill sets. The T/DCFO was delighted to report that of the 148 areas measured against, Wales achieved a green stratus within 143 areas (in line with best practice), amber status within 4 areas (partially in line with best practice) and red status within 1 area (not in line with best practice). Members commended the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services in being recognised as the best performing team of those assessed within the United Kingdom.

### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.***

- 10 **TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER ITEM OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100(B)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

There were no items of urgent business.

**The meeting closed at 12.10.**