

**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
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING**

**CYFARFOD O'R PWYLLGOR RHEOLI ADNODDAU
MEETING OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

DYDD LLUN, 24 TACHWEDD 2014

MONDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2014

**CANOLFAN HYFFORDDI EARLSWOOD,
EARLSWOOD, ABERTAWE**

**EARLSWOOD TRAINING CENTRE,
EARLSWOOD, SWANSEA**

10.00 – 13:00

93% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRPERSON: J Curtice
IS-GADEIRYDD/ DEPUTY E Williams
CHAIRPERSON:

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: G Thomas, G Tanner, W
Evans, D Cole, P Pritchard, L Frayling, C
Higgins, R Lewis, R Llewellyn, K Pearson,
R Rees-Evans, S Paddison,

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: J Bayliss, P James, A Wilcox

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: C Davies, E Aitken, R Quin, D Daycock,
K Jones, A Francis, M Margetts,
M Harries

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor J Bayliss

2 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

All Members present declared that they had a personal interest in any business relating to, or affecting their own Constituent Authority.

All Members present also declared an interest in relation to Agenda item 9.

When the items were considered Councillor W Evans declared a personal interest as a member of the Wales Ambulance Service Trust in relation to Agenda item 6.

Councillors E Williams and K Pearson declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 9.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair wished to thank the Officers and staff for the open and transparent information which was provided to Members in relation to this meeting.

The Chair informed Members that she had attended the Celebrating Success Awards held on the 20th November 2014 at the Liberty Stadium in Swansea and stated that she felt the evening had been a great success and wished to congratulate all the winners and those that were nominated.

4 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 14TH JULY 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2014 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

Matters Arising from the meeting held on 14th July 2014

There were no matters arising.

5 TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2014/15

The Director of Resources presented the Budget Monitoring Report 2014/2015 to Members. The report provided Members with the estimated revenue and capital net expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2015 and compared those estimated positions with the 2014/2015 working budget.

The estimated net expenditure was calculated by adding figures shown in the financial records plus known commitments at 31 October 2014 to the forecasted expenditure for the remainder of the year. The report also showed that capital financing was within the limits set by the Prudential Indicators.

The Director of Resources referred Members to Appendix 1 and stated that the current overspend of £941K (4% of the profiled budget) was estimated at 31 October 2014. Furthermore, it was reported to Members that the estimated expenditure for the year when compared to the budget report showed a forecast underspend of £564K (1.3% of the approved budget) estimated at 31 March 2015.

The Director of Resources reported that the gross operational cost of grant funded activity for the seven months ended 31 October 2014 was £793,736 and it was estimated that this figure would increase to £2,488,333 by the end of the year. After netting off income, the net remaining estimated was covered by grant approvals from Welsh Government, as illustrated on Appendix 2 of the report.

The Director of Resources further explained to Members the key financial implications as outlined in section number 5 of the report.

Members were also provided with an overview of the Capital Monitoring Report 2014/15 which summarised the expenditure on Capital Projects to 31 March 2015 in Appendix 3 and compared the results against the Approved Capital Programme.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resources Management Committee note the information contained within the Report.

6 TO RECEIVE THE JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES ON THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/16

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) informed Members that he would present the first part of the Joint Report on the Budget Requirement for the Financial Year 2015/16 and that the Director of Resources would present the remainder.

The CFO referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report and provided an overview of the achievements made within each of the Service's Improvement Objectives namely;

- Managing Risk
- Managing People
- Working Together
- Managing Resources
- Managing Performance

Furthermore, it was reported to Members that efficiencies had been made during 2013/14 including introducing a new crewing model at Llanelli Fire Station saving £400k, introducing a new crewing model at Port Talbot Fire Station saving £143k, achieving further savings through Early Voluntary Retirements of £163k and savings through the ending of protection arrangements for Station Managers of £80k.

Members were informed of the current work in standardising working practices and processes through the National Issues Committee (NIC) which had also realised significant savings across the 3 Welsh Fire Authorities.

Members were reminded of the Joint Control Room project which would provide an improved level of service delivery to the public. Furthermore, as a result of the project a financial saving of over £1m per annum would be realised.

With regard to the contingency arrangements during the industrial action the CFO stated that a UK wide dispute continued. However the Welsh Government had provided 2 proposals to potentially resolve the dispute, which were currently being consulted upon. The CFO informed Members that throughout the recent industrial action the Service had developed robust contingency arrangements and had consistently maintained a response availability of between 60% and 80% during strike actions.

The CFO further reported that the Service's Co-Responder Teams had attended 1875 medical emergencies during 2013/14, and in excess of 6000 since the scheme began. Furthermore, Members were informed that plans were currently underway to expand the scheme to include 2 further locations at no additional cost to Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) or the community.

Members were informed that an initiative had been led by Mid and West Wales Fire Authority to bring together all the water rescue assets that exist within Wales and create a response group capable of a coordinated response to large scale flooding incidents. This had been presented to the Minister who was pleased to note the progress.

The CFO concluded by stating that in light of the information received from Welsh Government in October regarding the 50% cut in the Community Fire Safety grants, members of the Community Safety staff had regrettably received notice of redundancy as there was concern that their salaries would not be available post April 2014. The CFO reported to Members that Community Safety funding had already suffered a 20% cut which resulted in a reduced activity level being introduced.

At this point the Director of Risk went on to present the remainder of the report.

The Director of Risk stated that following the informal Corporate Planning days in May and September 2014, the Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting on 29th September 2014 had indicated potential levels of budget reduction and a consequent indicative budget requirement, pending the Provisional Settlement, which had been announced in detail on the 8th October 2014. Members were informed that the level of efficiencies indicated by Members was £800,000, which meant a budget requirement of £43,481,859 falling on the Constituent Authorities, a 1.32% increase. However, this decision was predicated on the expectation of an average settlement for the Constituent Authorities of up to a -4.5% reduction, as indicated by the previous Minister for Local Government and Government Business in her letter of 24th June 2014.

Members were informed that in the provisional settlement announced an overall reduction of -3.4% was made for all Wales for 2015/16, and -3.5% average settlement for the Constituent Authorities in the Service area. Unfortunately the Minister at the same time had gone on to announce a reduction of 50% in the Authority's Community Fire Safety (CFS) Grant, a reduction of £532,000, or 1.24% of the budget.

The Director of Resources stated that for 2015/16, Officers had identified the possibility of making savings on the revenue budget of £800,000, without affecting service delivery at stations or in prevention work. Members were referred to Appendix C where the Director of Resources provided an explanation to Members regarding the suggested list of efficiencies.

With regard to the grant funding the Director of Resources informed Members that a letter had been sent to the new Minister, Mr L Andrews in response to the letter received on the 2nd October 2014. The letter responded to the proposed 50% cut in grant funding and also the proposed the provisional settlement.

Members were informed that in light of the announcement of a reduction of £532k in CFS grant Members were required to decide upon how to deal with the impact of the reduction and recommend their proposal to the Fire Authority accordingly.

The Director of Resources highlighted the options available to Members and reminded members that at previous meetings Members had expressed the view that safety in the Community would not be compromised.

The Director of Resources stated that there was a £1m levy equalisation, however Members were reminded that they had since decided that £605,000 of the Levy equalization reserve had been utilized to support this year's budget, which left £400k.

With regard to the Retained Duty System (RDS) the Director of Resources explained to Members of the concerns regarding backdated costs which could arise as a result of the court case that gave equal status to RDS personnel in terms of pension arrangements. Currently the outcomes were not known, therefore it was not clear what the percentage of the backdated contributions/pensions payments the FRA would be expected to cover.

Members were informed that the Resource Management Committee's role was to make budget recommendations to the full Fire Authority in order to enable it to set a 'draft' budget on the 15th December 2014.

The Director of Resources then went on to explain what each of the Appendices contained.

In response to Councillor Evans' query regarding Co-Responders, the CFO stated that the Authority did not make any profit from Co-Responder calls.

At this point Councillor Evans declared an interest in relation to Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST).

In response to a query from Councillor Higgins, the CFO informed Members that he had offered to discuss the budget implications with each of the Constituent Authorities but the offer had not been taken up.

Councillor K Pearson wished to congratulate Officers on their performance which was a direct result on their community safety work, it was disappointing to learn that the Welsh Government intended to cut grant funding which in her view they should be sustaining.

Councillor Paddison raised concern that the Constituent Authorities would also suffer from the loss of Community Safety work from the Fire Service in the longer term, through the impact upon Social Services and the cost of a fire, and that therefore, it would be prudent to continue with the preventative work and perhaps Local Authorities charge for the cost.

Councillor Cole stated that he felt the Authority was being penalised for its own success and wished that the proactive preventative work continued.

The Chair informed Members that there would be vote by a show of hands on each Recommendation.

Recommendation 1:

By a show of hands all Members voted in favour of Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 2:

At this point Members considered the options available within recommendation 2. The Chief Fire Officer assisted Members with regard to the choices in relation to the Community Fire Safety grant, by referring to page 7 of the report.

Councillor Thomas proposed an amendment incorporating option d) a compromise of the choices, namely the making of further efficiencies amounting to 50% of the grant, with the remaining 50% being funded by the Constituent Authorities, a further in total 1.99% increase on the total increase. This amendment was seconded. The Director of Resources clarified to Members that the compromise was as stated in the option number 4 on page 7 of the report. By a show of hands all Members were in favour of the proposal.

Councillor E Williams further suggested that £50k be made available from reserves to phase in the efficiencies. Following the suggestion Councillor Williams altered his amendment to Recommendation 2, which was seconded as follows;-

That there be a further total 1.99% total increase for the Constituent Authorities to meet the reduction in the Community Fire Safety grant, and in order to help facilitate this, a contingent sum of £50k from Reserves be made available.

By a show of hands all Members were in favour of the amendment.

Recommendation 3:

By a show of hands all Members voted in favour of Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 4:

By a show of hands all Members voted in favour of Recommendation 4.

Recommendation 5:

By a show of hands all Members voted in favour of Recommendation 5.

Members then voted on all 5 Recommendations, as amended. By a show of hands all Members voted in favour of all 5 Recommendations.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority:-

- 1) Agree a level of efficiencies set at £800k as set out in Appendix C. On its own, this proposal would mean a budget requirement of £43,481,859 falling on the Constituent Authorities, a 1.32% increase.***
- 2) A 1.99% total increase be required from the Constituent Authorities be made in order to meet the reduction in the Community Fire Safety grant and in order to help facilitate this, a contingent sum of £50k from Reserves be made available.***
- 3) That the budget requirement is not funded from reserves (with exception from the £50k contingency resolution in Recommendation 2 above)***
- 4) That the Capital Programme attached at Appendix B be approved, leading to the capital financing charges shown as additional in Appendix A.***
- 5) The approval of the vehicle replacement programme attached at Appendix D.***

7 TO RECEIVE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Risk presented to the Committee the update report on Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management.

Members were informed that effective health, safety and welfare arrangements were a key component in the Services' approach to managing workplace safety and highlighted the key areas currently being addressed by the Service.

The Director of Risk highlighted to Members that the control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR) 2013 were a topic of debate between HSE officials and the Chief Fire Officer Association (CFOA), however, it had been agreed that three-yearly medical surveillance of firefighters was reasonable and the discrepancy between the requirements of CAR 12 and Fire and Rescue Service medical norms would be examined at the same time that the CAR 12 is reviewed in 2017.

The Director of Risk provided an explanation of the graphs which were set out in the report.

The Head of Corporate Risk Mr Mydrian Harries provided Members with an update on the Corporate Health Standard and reported to Members that on Friday 10th October 2014, Cllr Roy Llewellyn along with representatives of the Service were presented the prestigious Gold Award from Sir Derek Jones, Permanent Secretary, Welsh Government at the inaugural Working Wales Event.

The Director of Risk referred to Appendix A which detailed a specific fire appliance accident which occurred in July 2014. Members were briefed about an incident involving a fire appliance travelling from Carmarthen Fire Station which collided with a property at the junction linking Water Street and St Catherine Street whilst on route to a car fire on the A40.

Members were informed that the accident investigation had been completed which resulted in the appliance driver receiving refresher training and being re-assessed by the Services Driving Instructor department. Furthermore, the appliance had been successfully repaired and return to the Station. Members were also informed that as part of the Services continuous improvement process for occupational road risk management lessons learnt from this event had been promulgated Service wide in an attempt to avoid a recurrence.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resources Management Committee note the information contained within the Report.

8 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Temporary Assistant Chief Officer (T/ACO) K Jones presented the report on Health and Wellbeing to Members.

Members were informed that the Service's sickness absence statistics for the period 01 April 2014 – 30 September was 4.00 shifts lost with a projected overall for the year of 8.00 shifts lost for the 2014-15 financial year.

Members were referred to the appendices attached to the report and were informed that Appendices 2-11 detailed both long and short term sickness absence rates, together with illness types within the reporting categorisation protocols for statistical analysis as required by the Welsh Government.

Appendix 11 of the report exemplified the total days lost through ill-health sickness and off-duty injuries. The T/ACO stated that it was evident that the instances for lost days to sickness owing to anxiety/stress had now overtaken the more 'traditional' absences associated with musco-skeletal related absences normally associated with a physically demanding occupation. However, Members were assured that the Service was doing its utmost to support colleagues suffering from anxiety/stress with facilities such as a Confidential Helpline, and (where appropriate) access to one-to-one counselling being made available to employees.

Councillor Rees-Evans acknowledged that staff seemed to be more comfortable with reporting illness relating to anxiety/depression than they were a few years ago and that the historical stigma associated with such illnesses having largely been removed within society and the workplace .

Councillor Paddison stated that it was pleasing to hear the amount of work being carried out to minimise absences related to anxiety/stress and support those suffering with such illnesses. The T/ACO stated that the Service would regularly support around 4 sessions of counselling which was found to be beneficial and cost-effective as opposed to the individual and organisational effects of long term absences from the workplace.

The Temporary Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development, A Francis stated that tenders were currently being received from specialist training providers to assist with the roll out of a stress management awareness course for Supervisory Managers in the workplace. Members were informed that this would aim to train staff to identify signs and symptoms of stress within colleagues and provide the appropriate support and potential intervention at an early stage, thus avoiding the longer term effects associated with such illnesses.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Committee note the report on Health and Wellbeing.

9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

At this point Councillor E Williams and K Pearson left the room.

The Clerk/Monitoring Officer presented the report on the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRPW) for Wales Draft Annual Report 2015/16.

Members were informed that Committee Members could send their individual comments/representations regarding the IRPW Report directly to the Panel by 27th November 2014.

The Clerk/Monitoring Officer highlighted to Members that this year the Panel had decided that there would be no increase in remuneration given to the continued constraints on local government spending.

Members were reminded that Fire Authorities could pay a senior salary to the Chair, Deputy Chair and up to two other Members. Furthermore, the Fire Authority, at its meeting on the 16th April 2012, resolved that the Fire Authority would not adopt senior salaries for committee chairs at that time. The matter was revisited at the Fire Authority meeting on 24 June 2013 whereby it was resolved to revoke the Senior Salary currently paid to the Deputy Chair of the Fire Authority, and that the decision not to pay Senior Salaries to the Deputy Chair be continue, and that the issue be revisited in the next municipal year.

The Clerk/Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that accordingly Members needed to determine whether they would recommend to the Fire Authority pay senior salaries to the Deputy Chair of the Fire Authority and Committee Chairs.

The Committee was informed that the existing payments were met in the budget however, should Members decide to pay the senior salaries this would involve a further cost of up to 3 x £5.400.

Councillor W Evans commented that the duties of the Deputy Chair involved a large commitment by the Member, and carried a considerable work load and he was of the view that not paying a salary for this role could influence the decision of potential future Deputy Chairs.

Councillor R Lewis stated that he had not been in agreement with the removal of the senior salary for the Deputy Chair and that it should be re-instated.

Councillor Higgins stated that he felt the selection process for Chair and Deputy Chair was inappropriate and accordingly did not wish to support the payment of senior salary.

The Chair requested that Members vote on the each of the recommendations:-

Recommendation 1;

That the Committee note the draft annual report and the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities for 2015/2016.

By a show of hands Members voted in favour.

Recommendation 2;

That Committee Members send their individual comments/representations directly to the Panel by 27th November 2014.

By a show of hands Members voted in favour.

Recommendation 3;

That the Committee recommend to the Fire Authority that the senior salaries to be paid to the Deputy Chair of the Fire Authority and Committee Chairs next municipal year.

Councillor Evans stated that he was comfortable with not receiving the Senior Salary this year however, Councillor Evans proposed that the payment of the senior salary to be paid to the Deputy Chair voted for the next municipal year, which was seconded.

This was voted by a show of hands and the majority of Members were in favour of the proposal.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED:-

- 1) That the Committee note the draft annual report and the determinations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales for Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities for 2015/2016.**
- 2) That Committee Members send their individual comments/representations directly to the Panel by 27th November 2014.**
- 3) That the Committee recommend to the Fire Authority that a senior salary be paid to the Deputy Chair of the Fire Authority but not the Committee Chair for the next municipal year.**

- 13 Any other items of business that by reason of special circumstance, the Chair decides should be considered as a matter of urgency, pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.**

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 13:00.