

**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, 25 TACHWEDD 2013

MONDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2013

**PENCADLYS Y GWASANAETH TÂN AC ACHUB
HEOL LLWYN PISGWYDD, CAERFYRDDIN
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS,
LIME GROVE AVENUE, CARMARTHEN**

11.00 – 14:15

93%PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

**CADEIRYDD/CHAIRPERSON:
IS-GADEIRYDD/ DEPUTY
CHAIRPERSON:**

**W Evans
J Curtice**

AELODAU/MEMBERS:

**Cyng/Cllrs: D Cole, L Frayling, C Higgins,
A Lewis, R Lewis, R Llewellyn, C Lloyd, S
Paddison, K Pearson, R Rees-Evans, G
Thomas, E Williams**

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:

No apologies recorded

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:

**R Smith, P Bates, E Aitken, D Daycock,
C Davies, D Masson, C Jackson, K Jones**

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

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 declared an interest in item 12 of the agenda relating to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2014/15.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Councillors D Cole and L Frayling to their first meeting of the Resource Management Committee.

The Chair reminded Members that a training session on 'Probity, Governance and Good Decision Making' would be held on conclusion of the meeting and encouraged all Members to attend.

4 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 JULY 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2013 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

5 TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2012/13

The Director of Resources introduced the budget monitoring report which compared the estimated revenue and capital net expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2014 and compared those estimated positions with the 2013/14 working budget.

Attention was drawn to the revenue budget monitoring set out in Appendix 1 of the report, whereby Committee were informed that there was a total under spend of £230k which represented 1.3% of the budget. Members were provided with an overview of the areas of underspend in terms of employees (unfilled vacancies), premises and transport. Committee were informed that an overspend was currently projected for on-call employees in respect of recruitment costs. Committee were informed that the estimated expenditure for the year when compared to the budget report showed a forecast underspend of £652k (1.49% of the profiled budget) estimated at 31 March 2014, which would be put into reserves.

Members of the Committee drew attention to the Grant Monitoring Report for 2013/14 which was set out in Appendix 2 of the report. The Director of Resources informed Committee that the gross operational and non-operational cost of grant funded activity for the six months ended 30 September 2013 was £400,314, and it was estimated

that this would increase to £1,390,600 by the end of the year. The net remaining estimated balance of £1,279,546 was covered by grant approvals from Welsh Government.

The Committee also considered the capital monitoring set out in Appendix 3 of the report which summarised the expenditure on capital projects to 31 March 2014 and compared the results against the Approved Capital Programme. Following a request from a Member the Director of Resources agreed to provide a breakdown of the 'vehicles' section and costings to date to the Committee.

RESOLUTION

It was *RESOLVED* that the report be noted.

6 TO RECEIVE THE JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES ON THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2014/15

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the range of improvement objectives set by the Authority had enhanced the level of service delivered to the local communities across Mid and West Wales, as evidenced by the on-going reducing trend in the number of fires, injuries and deaths year on year. Such improvements had delivered a first class service set against a backdrop of significant financial pressures during a challenging economic climate.

Members were provided with an overview of the areas of progress made surrounding the Authority's objectives in terms of community safety and operational response. An outline of the Authority's achievements in the areas of managing risk, managing people, working together, managing resources and managing performance was also provided. The Chief Fire Officer reported that the Wales Audit Office had published its Annual Improvement Report in May 2013, which concluded that the Authority was likely to comply with the requirement to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement, although it was recognised that the organisation faced on-going challenges in implementing planned changes to services. The Wales Audit Office had reached this conclusion based upon the Authority's improved business planning arrangements, effective management of financial challenges, progress made in addressing previous proposals for improvement, improved approach to public engagement and also due to its sound governance arrangements.

The Chief Fire Officer emphasised the importance of introducing planned budget reductions in line with the Authority's medium term financial strategy, in order to ensure minimal impact on the Authority's ability to provide fire and rescue services to the communities served. It was recognised that the Authority would need to balance an increasingly austere economic background with its aims and ambitions, which would prove challenging considering the potential level of budget reductions necessary.

Committee were informed that the Authority had, in recent years, targeted its budget based upon the average for the 'like for like' reductions within Constituent Authorities,

however following the Welsh Government's All Wales Budget announcement in early October 2013, and more detailed individual local authorities' announcement in mid October, to mirror these figures could have a detrimental impact on the services provided to communities. It had therefore been prudent to hold corporate planning workshops with management, Trade Union Representatives and Fire Authority Members in order to illustrate the various options available to the Authority to achieve savings in the region of £5m over a three year period.

Attention was drawn to Appendix C of the report which illustrated possible options that were available to the Authority to achieve efficiency savings, based upon the professional advice of the Head of Paid Service. It was noted that the list entitled 'option 1' represented efficiencies which were not considered to be reductions in level of service delivery and would total £4.320 million over a three year period. However, if Members wished to make savings commensurate with the Constituent Authority average, they would be required to select a further £736k savings from the list in option 2, all of which would have an impact on service delivery.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Committee that proceeding with the options which had an impact on service delivery would not contravene Constituent Authorities' responsibility, through the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, to discharge their duties to maintain an effective Fire and Rescue Service in their areas through the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that a number of efficiency exercises had been undertaken over the past few years which had generated significant efficiency savings to the Authority. Reference was made to the Service Review Programme (SRP) which had generated various options for consideration, should they be required. Included amongst these was a strategic review of the locations of fire stations, which had highlighted that fire cover could be provided from surrounding communities for those stations noted in the list of possible closures provided under option 2 of the report. The Chief Fire Officer emphasised that the options to close fire stations presented to Members were not based on the level of on-call availability at those stations. It was also highlighted that more detailed investigation and consultation would be required if Members were to proceed with the options provided, however a steer from Members was required in order to develop a draft budget for consideration by the Authority at its meeting on 9 December 2013.

Some Members expressed the view that the Authority should resolve against the closure of stations for the next two years. Other Members, however, were of the opinion that whilst a budget reduction level should be recommended to the Fire Authority, further information and additional time was required in order to make an informed decision as to the detail of the efficiency savings required. A discussion ensued regarding the proposed options being too heavily focussed on front line services and some Members were of the opinion that all other possible options needed to be explored in the first instance, including a review of the management structure, collaboration opportunities and the introduction of additional volunteer stations, prior to considering station closures.

Following a request from Members it was agreed that information relating to the Service Review Programme would be provided to Members, along with a copy of the organisational structure. Furthermore, in addition to the Fire Authority meeting scheduled for Monday 9 December, Members requested a further full Fire Authority meeting on Monday 16 December 2013, commencing at 10:00hrs in order to further discuss the budget requirements for the financial year 2014/15. The Clerk agreed that this was possible, though alternatively the meeting could stand adjourned and be reconvened at 10:00hrs on Monday 16 December 2013.

The Director of Resources provided Members with a breakdown of costings within the reserves which had been earmarked for specific purposes, including insurance fund, pensions, community safety grant support, travelling protection, and attendance at major incidents. Reserves would also need to be used as a temporary measure until the reductions emanating from any efficiency savings agreed by the Authority would come into fruition. It was emphasised that the reserves should not be used in place of making decisions to affect efficiencies. Committee were also reminded that in 2011/12 the Fire Authority reduced the contributions of the Constituent Authorities by £1million as a one-off gesture, as budget savings were made earlier than anticipated. Many of the Constituent Authorities indicated that they were intending to utilise these monies to reduce their Fire Authority budget contributions over the next few years.

Members were referred to the budget requirement shown in Appendix A of the report which included assumptions for the validation of the 2013/14 budget into 2014/15 totalling 2.1%, in terms of staff pay awards, employers contribution to the Local Government Pension Fund, inflation, vehicle replacement costings, capital financing charges and increasing previous shortfalls in budget heads.

Committee were informed that the Revenue Support Grant Settlement had this year relied on the 2011 census rather than the 2001 census and were therefore duly provided with a breakdown of the allocation of the budget that would be required from each Constituent Authority, based on a standstill budget.

The Director of Resources emphasised to the Committee that the Authority was obliged, in accordance with the requirements of the Combination Scheme Order, to submit an estimate of its net expenses for the following year to its Constituent Unitary Authorities by the 31st December annually, before determining the final budget by 15th February prior to the relevant financial year.

Councillor Higgins proposed an amendment to recommendation 1 of the report. The amendment read as follows:

'That the Resource Management Committee recommend to the Fire Authority a budget reduction of 1.56%, with no specific options for efficiencies being identified at present.'

On being put, the amendment was carried.

Consideration was given to recommendation 2 of the report. Upon being put, the

recommendation was carried.

Consideration was given to recommendation 3 of the report. Upon being put, the recommendation was carried.

Consideration was given to recommendation 4 of the report. Upon being put, the recommendation was carried.

Consideration was given to recommendation 5 of the report. A number of Members expressed the view that the recommendation be postponed pending further information being provided to Members. Upon being put, the recommendation was lost.

Consideration was given to recommendation 6 of the report. Upon being put, the recommendation was carried.

Consideration was given to recommendation 7 of the report. Upon being put, the recommendation was carried.

Councillor E Williams proposed an additional recommendation which was seconded. The recommendation read:

'That the Resource Management Committee recommend that during the next two financial years, there be no closure of fire stations.'

Upon being put, the recommendation was lost.

RESOLUTION

It was *RESOLVED* that the Resource Management Committee recommend to the Fire Authority

- 1. That a budget reduction of 1.56% be approved, with no specific options for efficiencies being identified at present;**
- 2. That the budget level selected for 2014/15 be part funded by £180k from reserves.**
- 3. That the Constituent Authorities be requested for the balance as their contribution for the 2014/15 year.**
- 4. That the Capital Programme attached at Appendix B be approved, leading to the capital financing charges shown as additional in Appendix A.**
- 5. That the vehicle replacement programme attached at Appendix D be not approved.**
- 6. That the Director of Resources be authorised to decide on the appropriate method of financing of vehicles (be it leasing or otherwise) at**

the time of procurement.

7. That consideration be given to the Authority's redundancy and early retirement policies.

7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON BANKING – CHEQUE INDEMNITY

The Director of Resources reported that the Authority had moved to a system where cheques were printed onto security coated blank stationery as a means of improving security. It was explained that the cheque layout and Treasurer's signature were now added to the cheque at the time of printing, therefore, pre-signed cheques were no longer held.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Committee recommend that the Fire Authority authorise the Chair of the Fire Authority to sign a cheque issue indemnity in favour of Barclays Bank PKC.

8 TO RECEIVE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Risk presented Committee with the Health and Safety Performance Management Update for the reporting period 1 April 2013 to 30 September 2013. A total of 38 On Duty Injuries had been recorded, compared with the 35 injuries reported during the same period in 2012. The Director of Risk explained that the main cause of reported on duty injuries could mainly be attributed to slips, trips or falls.

Members also gave consideration to the breakdown of the various injuries incurred during the reporting period by cause, location and employee type. A general overview of the health, safety and welfare performance across the Service during the reporting period was also provided.

During the reporting period there were 6 reported attacks on Firefighters which the Service would continue to closely monitor. Members were assured that the personal safety of firefighters was closely monitored and in particular the Service operated a zero tolerance policy on firefighter attacks, with all appliances being equipped with CCTV which would be reported to the police as appropriate to assist in their investigations.

Committee were informed that a robust health and safety inspection regime was in place whereby the Health and Safety Union Representatives were invited to join the audit team to share findings.

An overview of the Corporate Health Standard was provided to Committee whereby the Director of Risk confirmed that the Service were aiming to attain the Gold Standard criteria during its assessment in January 2014.

Members were informed that there had been 65 reported vehicle accidents for the period 1 April 2013 to 30 September 2013, compared with 66 in the same period in 2012/13.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED:

That the information contained within the report be noted.

9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development introduced the quarterly report on health and wellbeing which centred upon sickness absence performance in line with the Welsh Government's aim of enabling people to be healthy citizens.

Reference was made to Appendix 1 of the report which showed that the overall average sickness absence figure for the Service for the period 1 April 2013 – 31 October was 5.47 shifts lost, which would provide a projected overall figure for the year of 9.37 shifts lost and remained outside of the Service's target of 4.83 shifts lost.

In response to a query from a Member the Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development explained that a number of intervention strategies had been implemented to assist employees in keeping in work or assisting in their return to work as part of the Service's robust support infrastructure. These strategies included self referrals to Occupational Health, a confidential counselling helpline, regular contact with Line Managers and a managed return to work initiative, and home working policy, amongst others. Committee were informed that the sickness target of 4.83 shifts lost had been set as a deliberately challenging target, in order that the Service focussed its efforts on minimising the number of sickness absences.

Committee were provided with an overview of both long and short term sickness within the Service during the reporting period as set out in appendices 2-15 of the report and consideration was also given to the five year retirement profile on the grounds of ill-health within the Service which remained low.

Committee drew attention to Appendix 4 of the report which provided a summary of sickness absences across stations. Committee were informed that the increased sickness figures within Pontardawe Fire Station could be attributed to a limited number of long term absences which had consequently skewed the overall sickness absence figure for that station. In response to a query from a Member the Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development agreed to provide further information to Committee with regard to sickness absence figures within Pembroke Dock fire station.

RESOLUTION

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

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE INSTITUTE OF WELSH AFFAIRS

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development informed the Committee that the Service had been successful in winning first place for the Learning and Development Staff Award at the Institute of Welsh Affairs Awards Ceremony held on 8 November 2013 at City Hall, Cardiff. It was reported that the category had been aimed at individuals or teams that had introduced innovative and quality-related training programmes, designed to enhance the performance of organisations based in Wales and was open to individuals, educational establishments, voluntary bodies, individual companies, trade unions and public agencies. It was noted that Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service was the only public sector organisation that had won the business award.

The Chair, on behalf of all Members, commended the Service's sterling achievements in the area of learning and development and paid tribute to those Officers, and in particular the People and Organisational Development Department, who had contributed to the Service receiving national recognition in the form of the Institute of Welsh Affairs award.

RESOLUTION

It was **RESOLVED**

It was RESOLVED that the Committee the achievement of the Service in attaining best programme for Learning and Developing Staff Award be noted.

11 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development informed Committee that the Service had recently been awarded the Investors in People Silver Award in recognition of its progress in the field of learning and development since the previous assessment in 2010.

Members were informed that the standard provided a national framework for improving performance, and had been proven to help manage change, improve innovation and reduce sickness absence, staff turnover and recruitment costs.

The independent accreditation process identified that the Service demonstrated strong ownership, accountability and leadership and the feedback received also indicated that, from the 165 indicators required for Gold standard, the Service did meet an excellent 140 indicators. Committee were informed that Mrs I Banham, the Independent Assessor, would present her full assessment report at a future meeting of the Fire Authority.

The Chair, on behalf of all Members, commended the Service's sterling achievements in achieving the Investors in People Silver Award.

RESOLUTION

It was **RESOLVED**:

- 1. The achievement of the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service in attaining the Investors in People Silver Standard in the Service wide assessment be noted.**
- 2. That a full presentation of the Assessor's report be provided at a future meeting of the Fire Authority**

12 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer reported that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) had been established to regulate and determine Members' allowances and payments.

Members were presented with the draft annual report incorporating the proposals for the financial year 2014/15, which sought to provide parity of payment of Fire Authorities with those of Constituent Authorities.

Members were informed that the IRPW had requested that any representations or comments on the draft report would need to be provided prior to the end of the consultation period on 26 November 2013, and that Members should make any representations or comments directly to the IRPW.

RESOLUTION

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

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 were no items of urgent business.