

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN  
CYMRU**



**MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**COFNODION  
CYFARFOD YR AWDURDOD**

a gynhaliwyd yn Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin

**Dydd Llun 5 Rhagfyr 2005**

**MINUTES  
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING**

held at County Hall, Carmarthen

**Monday 5 December 2005**

**PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: C J Crowley

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: J J J Davies,  
Mrs T Devichand, T E Evans,  
D R James, P James, F M Jones,  
R Lewis, P Llewellyn, C Morgan,  
G Phillips, C Philpott, D R Price,  
D C Prothero, P E Spender,  
T Theophilus, J D A Thompson,  
C Waller, M Williams

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/ Cllrs: B J Hall, G Seabourne

**1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

None were declared.

**2 TO RECEIVE AND CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 19<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005**

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2005 were received and approved as a true record

**3 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES**

The minutes of the following Committee Meetings were received and noted:

- i) The Personnel Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2005
- ii) The Standards Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2005
- iii) The Resources Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2005
- iv) The Modernisation Group held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2005
- v) The Performance and Policy Review Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2005

**4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2005**

**i) Item 5 – To receive the Treasurer’s budget monitoring report for the financial year 2005/2006**

*It was agreed that the following paragraphs would be inserted as an addition to the above item, immediately before the resolution:*

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the Authority was making significant progress in meeting its declared objectives of making communities safer and that the indicative budget was designed to provide the resources to allow that progress to be maintained and carried forward to future years.

Members were aware of the close link that existed between the process of Integrated Risk Management Planning and the budget requirement that flowed from it. Decisions made by the Authority early in 2004/2005 had allowed the completion of the IRMP consultation period and a final Authority decision to be made on changes prior to the setting of the indicative budget for 2005/2006, and the two subsequent years. This requirement anticipated the full implementation of the IRMP changes within a defined time period.

The Authority had subsequently agreed to a request made by the Welsh Assembly Government to defer, until the publication of new guidance, the implementation of two of the specific proposals within the IRMP which related to changes to day crewing arrangements at two fire stations. The Chairman of the Authority had subsequently written to the leaders of the six Unitary Authorities indicating that this deferral would have a significant impact on existing and

future budgets. The deferral would cause delay in realising savings that would be made from those proposals that would therefore not be available for re allocation to areas of service priority.

Committee were informed that the remaining proposals in the IRMP were now largely implemented or in the process of being so which had allowed some redirection of resources in line with the original intention of the IRMP. The Welsh Assembly Government, when making its request for deferral had appreciated that there were financial consequences flowing from this request. The Authority had subsequently received grant aid for 2005/2006 of £140,000 from the Welsh Assembly Government to support Community Fire Safety interventions that were previously to have been supported from savings made. However, Members were aware that the Assembly would not guarantee this grant would be awarded in subsequent years irrespective of the outcome of the Assembly's guidance in respect of the deferred changes to day crewing arrangements

The Chief Fire Officer reminded Committee that the Authority had taken on board new statutory duties under the 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act which would inevitably create significant financial challenges if the Authority continued to have outside limitations placed on its ability to redirect resources to areas of activity of greatest benefit and need. The Authority had identified significant opportunities to deploy resources more effectively utilising IRMP and the publication of the new IRMP guidance would allow this process to continue. Members discussed the significant implications that reducing the proposed budget requirement could have on their IRMP. They were of the opinion that they wished to continue with its implementation as planned and did not wish to run the risk of relying on a further grant from the Assembly Government or being subject to further outside limitations. They further considered that the budget must be robust enough to avoid utilising the contingency sum early in the year as had occurred in previous years.

**ii) Item 6 – To consider a draft response to a policy review on the restructuring of constabulary being undertaken by the National Assembly of Wales**

The Clerk advised that the Authority's response was available for viewing on the Service's external web site

**5 TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2004/2005 AND A PRESENTATION THEREON BY THE DISTRICT AUDITOR**

The Vice Chair welcomed Mr Ceri Stradling, District Auditor and Mr Bob Poulton, Audit Manager to the meeting.

Mr Stradling, in presenting the Annual Audit letter for the Financial Year 2004/2005, confirmed that the Authority's accounting and budgetary control arrangements continued to remain of an effective and accurate standard, and expressed his appreciation to the Treasurer and the Finance Team for their co-operation and assistance.

Mr Stradling referred to the exceptional period of change and uncertainty that had faced the Fire and Rescue Service in Wales over the past two years with

particular reference to the publication of the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in which the Assembly had expressed its intention of working with the Wales Audit Office in developing the Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI). Reference was further made to the Authority's Performance Management Framework which, at the request of the Chief Fire Officer, would be reviewed in two stages by the Authority's Auditors, who would then assist in progressing its implementation. Mr Stradling highlighted this as an excellent example of joint working practice. It was noted that as the WPI would not be implemented for Fire and Rescue Services until April 2006, that a Best Value Performance Plan for 2005/2006 had been prepared as an interim measure which had been made available on the Authority's website. Discussions between the Assembly and the Fire Service on the full implementation of the IRMP had also impacted on the Authority's ability to realise, in the short term, all the financial savings resulting from that plan. Members were pleased to note that the Audit fees had been reduced from the previous year as more cost-effective arrangements had been put in place. Referring to the recommendation made in last year's Audit letter that specific training requirements should be identified for Members and employees, it was noted that this had been taken on board and that a training programme was currently on going. Members expressed their appreciation to the District Auditor for the positive Audit letter and for bringing to their notice areas that required ongoing attention and which would be addressed.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***The report be received and that the key recommendations contained within the Annual Audit Letter 2004/2005 be adopted.***

## **6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY IN WALES – OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE**

Consideration was given to correspondence received from the Beecham Review Team Secretariat, and Members were aware that Sir Jeremy Beecham, Vice-Chair for the Local Government Association had been invited by the Welsh Assembly Government to examine arrangements for local service delivery in Wales. This initiative formed part of "Delivering the Connections" Action Plan. It was noted that all local public services had been invited to respond to the terms of reference of the review and to specific questions.

It was proposed that a comprehensive response to the review would be prepared with reference to the work undertaken by the Authority and Service, for example, within the Wales Fire Services Forum, Joint Emergency Services Group, Community Safety and Local Partnerships, WLGA and the Chief Fire Officers' Association. Whilst comments had been requested by the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2006, the Secretariat were prepared to accept responses later in the following week which would enable the Resources Committee to consider the Authority's

response at its meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> January.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*the proposed response to the Beecham Review be endorsed*

### **7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WLGA CONFERENCE HELD ON 3<sup>RD</sup> AND 4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005**

A report was received on the attendance of Councillors B Hall, Mrs T Devichand and Mrs C Philpott at the WLGA Conference held in Swansea on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted*

### **8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE 2005 FIRE CONFERENCE HELD IN MANCHESTER ON 2<sup>ND</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2005**

A report was received from Councillors T E Evans and D R James on their attendance at the 2005 FIRE Conference held in Manchester on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2005.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted*

### **9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AT THE ARMISTICE DAY REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY AT YPRES**

The Authority were represented at the Armistice Day Remembrance Service at the Menin Gate, Ypres on 11 November 2005 by Councillors Mrs F Jones, Mrs J Dudley and Mrs P Llewellyn

The representatives reported that they felt honoured to be given the opportunity to represent the Authority at the Ceremony, where they laid a wreath at the Menin Gate in remembrance of those who lost their lives on the Salient during the Great War.

Councillors Mrs F Jones, Mrs J Dudley and Mrs P Llewellyn wished to record their gratitude to the Authority for the opportunity and privilege of attending the Ceremony, and to the Colour Party, for its participation in the formal proceedings.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

***The report be received and noted and that the Authority be represented in Ypres in 2006***

### 10 TO RECEIVE ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The Service Delivery Reports from the County Commands were received for information and Councillor T E Evans made reference to previous discussions on the provision of sprinkler systems in schools with particular emphasis on new build. Councillor Evans expressed grave concerns that Ceredigion County Council had embarked on plans to build a new secondary school in Lampeter without the provision of a sprinkler system and Members agreed that they must take a concerted approach in order to highlight the issue to all Unitary Authorities.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

***Further letters to be sent out to the Chief Executives of the six Unitary Authorities and to the Welsh Assembly Government outlining the advantages of integral sprinkler systems in new schools.***

### 11 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON FIREFIGHTING AND RESCUE AT SEA

Members were reminded that the Authority had considered a report on Firefighting and Rescue at Sea at its meeting on 7th February 2005. An updated report was now available for Members consideration on the progress of the "Sea of Change" project which was a National partnership between CFOA and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency set up to deliver a more co-ordinated and resilient response to incidents off shore. The project had resulted in 15 fire and rescue services, including Mid and West Wales, forming the Maritime Incident Response Group.

At the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2005 Members had resolved to enter into an agreement with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), which allowed the Service to deploy its Offshore Incident Team as part of the Maritime Incident Response Group (MIRG).

The report provided an update for Members on the latest position with regard to the finalisation of the formal legal agreement with the MCA, the developments within the Service and the launch of the "Sea of Change" project in March 2006.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

***1. Members note the progress that had been made in the development of***

*a more robust offshore response by the Service.*

- 2. Members agree to the signing of the finalised agreement between the MCA and the Authority formalising the FRS being part of the Maritime Incident Response Group (MIRG)**
- 3. Members agree that the Authority be represented at the official launch of the Marine Incident Response Group and “Sea of Change” project which is scheduled to be held at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth on the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006.**