

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



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

**COFNODION
CYFARFOD YR AWDURDOD**

Ganolfan Gynadledda,
Pencadlys Y Gwasanaeth Tân Ac Achub, Caerfyrddin
12 Mawrth 2007

**MINUTES
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Conference Centre,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
12 March 2007

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:	B J Hall
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:	C J Crowley
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: J S Allen-Mirehouse, Mrs K Becton, Mrs T Devichand, T E Evans, K Harris, D R James, P James, Mrs F M Jones, C Morgan, Mrs C Philpott, D Prothero, Mrs P Spender, T Theophilus, J D A Thompson, M Williams
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	Cyng/Cllrs: J J J Davies, Mrs J Dudley, G Phillips, C Waller

1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared

2 PERSONAL MATTERS

Members were aware that Mrs Judith Morris, Corporate Head of Policy and Member Support was attending her last meeting of the Fire Authority before she took up her new role within the Church.

Members warmly paid tribute to Mrs Morris for both the professionalism which she had brought to her role and for the friendship and kindness that she had shown to Members. Mrs Morris responded that it had been a privilege to work with the elected members and that the experience she had gained by working for the Authority would be invaluable in her future role.

3 TO CONSIDER A REPORT ON THE VALIDATION REVIEW OF PROCESS RELATING TO CREWING CHANGES AT HAVERFORDWEST FIRE STATION

Members had previously received a verbal report from the Chairman concerning discussions with the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration and Assembly Officials regarding the Minister's expressed concerns over changes to crewing arrangements at Haverfordwest Fire Station.

Following on from the meeting of 1st February 2007 when the Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Fire Officer had met with the Minister, Mrs Hart had subsequently published a consultation document on a proposed Intervention protocol for FRA's in Wales and changes to the Fire & Rescue National Framework for Wales. A response had been prepared, considered and submitted by the Authority.

This position had been reported to the Fire & Rescue Authority on 5th February 2007 where Members had agreed that any further deferment of implementation should not take place given that implementation plans were well advanced and relocation arrangements for displaced staff had been agreed in principle.

The Chief Fire Officer had subsequently been contacted by the Head of the Community Safety Directorate within WAG suggesting a formula for review which would recognise both the Authority's and the Ministers respective positions in relation to the Haverfordwest proposal.

The terms of reference for the review had been discussed and it was agreed that, subject to Members approval, to allow for an independent review, with the implementation at Haverfordwest going ahead as the Authority had determined. The costs associated with any review would be met by WAG.

The following terms of reference had been considered by the Policy and Performance Review Committee on 19th February 2007, at which meeting, Members were concerned that a matter as important as this necessitated consideration by the full Authority.

Terms of reference for review

In view of concerns expressed to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration concerning the implementation of new crewing arrangements at Haverfordwest Fire Station, the Mid and West Wales Fire Authority have agreed with the Minister that there will be an independent review undertaken of the rationale and the evidence on which the decision has been taken. This review will run alongside the peer review of the FRA's operational effectiveness that is already underway, and actions being taken forward as part of the Wales Programme for Improvement.

The review will aim to provide external validation to the Welsh Assembly Government, other stakeholders, and the wider public that the Fire Authority has acted in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales, and that in drawing up and implementing the proposal for Haverfordwest Fire Station they have acted in accordance with the guidance issued by the assembly Government on risk reduction planning.

The validation exercise will seek to ensure that in considering the proposal affecting Haverfordwest Fire Station the Authority has:-

- Acted in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales*
- Complied with the guidance on service standards to fires in the home*
- Complied with the guidance covering the preparation and consultation on the plan*
- Undertaken the planning process in such a way that takes account of known and expected major development in the wider area that could impact on public safety more generally*

The review will be undertaken by representatives of HMFSI Scotland and will include a health check of the utilisation made of the Fire Services Emergency Cover (FSEC) model in the context of its application to service standards developed in Wales. The health check will be undertaken by appointed consultants.

A representative of Fire Service trade unions will be offered the opportunity to observe the process.

Referring to the Minister's letter dated 8th March 2007, Members noted that Sir Graham Meldrum would be leading the review and indicated that they would wish to be allowed the opportunity to speak with him. Members had given the proposals contained within RRP their strongest backing which had been backed up by robust evidence and were fully confident that the review would find no evidence to change these views.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The terms of reference of the review be approved and that the review be approved to take place as soon as possible.

4 TRANSFERABILITY ACROSS ROLES

The Chief Fire Officer reported that in recent years, some posts which would previously have been occupied only by personnel with firefighting competences had been filled by personnel from Fire Control. Continuation of this practice, could compromise the resilience of the Service, thus seriously jeopardising the ability to deal with major staff absences, major incidents and New Dimensions incidents.

Officers have assessed the numbers of personnel required to provide a resilient workforce for the worst case scenarios, and a further analysis of the operational competence of all posts has been conducted to ensure that career progression and succession planning were not unduly compromised.

This work has now been completed and the recommendations contained within this paper would provide clear, unambiguous guidelines on which posts were deemed as 'operational essential' and must, therefore, be occupied by staff with suitable firefighting operational competences.

The recommendations would also allow a small number of posts to be designated as not operational essential, thereby allowing these posts to be redefined as non uniformed, resulting in some financial savings.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the following be approved:

- i) Forty one (41) of the existing forty-four (44) day duty posts at watch manager, crew manager and firefighter levels to be designated as 'operational essential'.*
- ii) Thirty eight (38) of the existing thirty-nine (39) day duty posts at station manager level to be designated as 'operational essential'.*
- iii) For those posts that had been identified as operational essential, an assessment of the training requirements for each individual to be conducted, and a suitable development programme instigated to develop and maintain an appropriate level of operational competence*