

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



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

**CYFARFOD O'R PWYLLGOR ADNODDAU
MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

DYDD LLUN, 23 EBRILL 2007

MONDAY, 24 APRIL 2007

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

11.00am – 11.55am

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:	T E Evans
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:	J J J Davies
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Allen-Mirehouse, Mrs J Dudley, C Morgan, G Phillips, D C Prothero, T Theophilus, J D A Thompson,
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	Cyng/Cllrs: Mrs T Devichand, Mrs P Spender
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	Cyng/Cllr: B J Hall, D R James D Mackay, R Smith, P Bailey, L Aitken, A Howells

1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTEREST

None were declared

2 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15th JANUARY 2007

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2007 were received and confirmed as a true record.

3 TO RECEIVE THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT'S REPORT ON THE BUDGET MONITORING FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2006/07

Revenue Monitoring Report for the period 1st April to 31st March 2007

The Director of Finance presented the report which compared expenditure shown in the ledger and known commitments with the 2006/07 Approved Budget. These figures were subject to amendment in the final accounts as the commitments become firm and as the closing entries required by accounting regulations were made.

On this basis, overall a net underspend of £15k was anticipated for the financial year 2006/07. This was made up of excess pensions expenditure to date of £613k, balanced against a £628k underspend on the revenue budget headings. The final deficit against budget on firefighters' pensions would be funded by a transfer from the Elective Pensioners Provision at the end of the year.

Capital Monitoring Report for the period 1st April to 31st March 2007

The report summarised the expenditure and financing of capital projects to date in comparison with the Approved Capital Programme. Cllr Morgan suggested that it would be more appropriate if the word 'furniture' was to be changed to 'fixtures and fittings'

Prudential Indicators

It was noted that capital financing was within the limits set by the Prudential Indicators.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted

4 TO CONSIDER THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT'S REPORT ON VAT ON RENTAL INCOME FROM THE JOINT FACILITY AT LLANDRINDOD WELLS

The Director of Finance reported that the method of funding the joint emergency

services facility at Llandrindod had not as yet been agreed with the Police and Ambulance services although provision had been broadly included in the Fire Authority budget on the basis of the traditional method of borrowing for capital and then renting to the other partners.

Should it be determined that the traditional method of funding was to be the way forward, the Authority had the option to charge VAT on any rental income from the joint facility.

If the option to tax was exercised the provision of the facility would become a business activity; input tax suffered on the building costs could be reclaimed, and the Police and the Ambulance Service would have to pay VAT on their rent and then recover the charge from the HMRC. It was noted that the option to tax would be effective for 20 years.

If the option to tax was not exercised the provision of the facility remained an exempt activity, the input tax suffered on the building costs would have to be included in the partial exemption calculations and would result in the Authority not being able to reclaim the VAT suffered on exempt activities. It had been estimated that this could result in a loss of £450,000 input tax.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED

The Authority exercise its option to tax the joint facility at Llandrindod Wells.

5 THE FINAL REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE FOR 2006/07

Committee were reminded that Carmarthenshire County Council provided an Internal Audit service to Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority through an Audit Plan which was agreed annually. The 2006/07 plan provided for 35 Internal Audit days.

The Internal Audit had been completed during 2006/07 and the audit report was finalised before the end of the financial year, as recommended in the Wales Audit Office audit report which had been presented to Members in October 2006.

Members noted that generally the systems in operation were found to be robust and that there were no fundamental areas of concern. Additional training sessions had been provided for Pembrokeshire Command who were now fully conversant with the standard formalised procedures.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted

6 THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE REGULATORY PLAN 2006/07

The Director of Finance reported that in order to discharge its responsibilities for Audit and Inspection, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) had produced a Regulatory Plan for the Authority. The Plan laid out a programme of work to address significant operational and financial risks, and had been agreed by Officers.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted

7 TO RECEIVE THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT'S REPORT ON THE ACCREDITATION OF THE AUTHORITY (FINANCE UNIT) AS AN ACCA (ASSOCIATION OF CHARTERED CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANTS) APPROVED EMPLOYER.

Members were pleased to learn that as from the 27/2/07 the Finance Unit had been awarded Approved Employer status for professional development and Silver Approved Employer status for trainee development under the ACCA accreditation scheme. These awards are valid for six years, unless circumstances change, but can be reapplied for at an earlier time to increase the level of status.

Obtaining this status was a significant accolade for the Service and made the service more attractive to both current and prospective employees who wished to train with ACCA .

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED

Congratulations be extended to the Finance Unit on their achievements under the ACCA Accreditation scheme.

8 TO CONSIDER THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT'S REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2007/08 AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

A report was received which set out the proposed policy and strategy which would underpin the treasury management activities undertaken by the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority in 2007/08. Attached was the proposed Treasury Management Practices showing how the Treasury Management activities would be carried out to ensure that the policy and strategy was adhered to.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Committee recommend to the full Authority the formal approval of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2007/08 together with the Treasury Management Practices.

9 TO CONSIDER ATTENDANCE AT THE CIPFA (CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC FINANCE AND ACCOUNTANCY) CONFERENCE AT BOURNEMOUTH FROM 12TH TO 14TH JUNE 2007

Consideration was given to member attendance at the CIPFA conference which is the foremost Local Government Finance Conference and would be of particular relevance to the Resources Committee. The agenda was attached for Members' information.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- i) The Chair of the Resources Committee be nominated to attend the CIPFA Conference***
- ii) The Conference be added to the list of Authority Standing Conferences***

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE ACQUISITION OF LAND AT LLANDRINDOD WELLS

The Fire Authority has for a number of years been seeking to purchase a plot of land at Llandrindod Wells in order to replace the existing Fire Station which no longer met with the needs of the Service.

As a result of negotiations with the landowner, three acres of land previously forming part of Noyadd Farm, Llandrindod Wells had been acquired on the 27th March 2007.

Powys County Council Solicitors, acting on behalf of the Service, had exchanged the relevant transfer documentation on this date. The Service had an option to purchase a further 3 acres of land in 2007/08 which it intended to complete during April and May.

Discussions had commenced with Dyfed Powys Police and the Welsh Ambulance Service to develop the proposed site for a tri-emergency services facility. The new site would also allow the service to complete the restructure of workshops within the Powys and Ceredigion Command and allow for the provision of training facilities within the centre of Powys Command.

Scoping work was currently underway to determine design, costing and

proposed financial arrangements with the two partners. It was anticipated that the scheme would take in the region of two years to fully complete and become operational.

Councillor J Thompson stressed the importance of the acquisition of the site to the Authority and welcomed the marvellous opportunity of sharing the site with the Police and Ambulance Service.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be noted

11 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE DIVING UNIT AT B1 HAVERFORDWEST

The Authority's Risk Reduction Plan 2007-10 had included an objective to review the provision of the Marine Rescue Unit (MRU). Previous Integrated Risk Management Plans had proposed a review of the MRU, however this had been deferred pending the publication of the findings of a national working group on sub surface rescue (diving). It was noted, however, that the publication of any such findings was unlikely, since the working group no longer meets and it was considered unnecessary to have any further delay in carrying out a review of the Unit.

An internal review of the Diving Unit at Haverfordwest had now been completed and had recommended that in the absence of alternative funding it was removed from the operational fleet and utilised for other service purposes. Members were aware that the Service was possibly the only Fire & Rescue Service in the Country to have its own diving unit and that this facility was duplicated by the Police who had responsibility to carry out diving procedures. In view of the high cost of running and maintaining the Unit and in the certainty that this type of rescue procedure was fully covered by the Police, Members agreed that the Unit should be removed.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- i) Members accept the report and in the absence of additional funding give approval for the removal of the Diving Unit at Haverfordwest with effect from 30th April 2007***
- ii) The Director of Service Delivery considers alternative uses for the vehicle***
- iii) The Diving Unit equipment to be disposed of in accordance with Financial Standing Orders***
- iv) Officers notify the appropriate agencies including the Police/MCA/HSE that the diving unit was being decommissioned.***

12 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CENTRAL WALES – WEST MIDLANDS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Chief Fire Officer had received correspondence from the Welsh Assembly Government inviting the Authority to be a signatory to a newly developed Memorandum of Understanding aimed at improving collaboration between Central Wales and the West Midlands Region.

Consideration was given to a paper which provided background to the initiative of which Members were very supportive. The implications of signing the MOU in terms of resourcing were not onerous and it had been proposed that there would be an annual strategic group meeting and a number of core officer group meetings which it was proposed would be attended by the Powys County Commander and a nominated Powys Member.

The potential collaborative opportunities presented by the MOU sat well with the Authority's overall objectives and were consistent with the wider Welsh Assembly Government "Making the Connections" agenda.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- i) Members approve the Authority becoming signatories to the document.*
- ii) A Powys Member sit on the Memorandum of Understanding's Strategic Group.*