

AWDURDOD TÂN CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN CYMRU



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AUTHORITY

**COFNODION
CYFARFOD YR GRŴP MODERNEIDDIO
MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE MODERNISATION GROUP**

**DYDD LLUN, 21 IONAWR 2008
MONDAY, 21 JANUARY 2008**

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

10.00am – 12 Noon

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: C J Crowley

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: T E Evans, P James,
D R James, J D A Thompson,
Mrs P Spender, T Theophilus

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: J S Allen-Mirehouse

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: R Smith, A Howells, J Maunder

1 TO APPOINT A CHAIR OF THE MODERNISATION WORKING GROUP

Councillor C Crowley was nominated and duly seconded. There were no other nominations.

Upon being put to the vote,

It was RESOLVED that Councillor C Crowley be elected Chair of the Modernisation Working Group

2 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared

3 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT FOR FIRE AUTHORITIES

Committee were reminded that in March 2007 the Fire Authority had agreed to apply for the WLGA's Wales Charter for Member Support & Development (WCMSD) for Fire Authorities. In September, the WLGA had published the final version of the Fire Authority framework which placed a specific emphasis on role skill, knowledge needs and support facilities and services.

An update of progress against the Charter had been given at the Members Training Seminar on the 5th November and the key areas to be discussed and agreed by the Modernisation Group were:

- Revised role descriptions
- Induction sessions
- Performance development reviews
- Training Needs Analysis
- Specialist training
- Evaluation update from the training seminar 5th November
- Mentoring – WLGA Framework Feb 2007
- Collaboration – training seminars etc
- Member Champion
- Date for submission of intention to apply for WCMSD

Members were provided with a folder containing the draft and supporting documentation of the key areas and also received a presentation on the work required to advance the Charter during which the following areas were highlighted:

New Code of Conduct: The Clerk reported that the publication of the new Code of Conduct had been delayed and that training would be carried out for all Members. The new Code was welcomed in that it included major changes and greater clarity in areas such as when a Member was required to declare an interest.

Training/ Induction Programme: Members welcomed the opportunity to participate in a structured and comprehensive training/induction programme which would serve to enhance their skills and knowledge of Service related issues.

Member Mentoring: It was proposed that Councillor J Thompson be nominated the current 'Member Champion' who would lead the Member Mentoring process. Councillor Thompson suggested that he undertake this role up until the Authority AGM and then proposed that this role become that of the Vice Chair of the Authority.

RECOMMENDATION

It was RESOLVED that

1) *The following were agreed:*

- ***Revised role descriptions***
- ***Induction sessions***
- ***Performance development reviews***
- ***Training Needs Analysis***
- ***Specialist training***
- ***Mentoring – WLGA Framework Feb 2007***
- ***Collaboration – training seminars***
- ***Member Champion to be Councillor Thompson***
- ***The date for submission of intention to apply for WCMSD to be April 2008***
- ***A coloured leaflet be prepared following the AGM containing Member contact details and photographs***
- ***A 'credit' card size card be produced listing meeting dates for the forthcoming year***
- ***The Member Handbook be updated following the AGM and distributed to all Members***

2) *It was agreed that the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority be committed to creating an environment of learning and development so as to equip Members with the necessary levels of skills and understanding to operate effectively and effectively*

4 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

The Clerk reported that Members would shortly receive preliminary feedback from the Wales Audit Office on "Member Engagement and Scrutiny". Topic areas that Members had indicated that they would wish further deliberation on, over and above that possibly contained in the report, and which were raised either in the last Members' Seminar or other forums included:-

- The role of Committee Chairs / Member Champions
- The use of task and finish groups:
 - Scrutiny Reviews (PRAC)

- Efficiency Reviews (Resources)
- Timing of meetings
- The role of Members in securing sustainability and sustainable procurement
- Committee structures post AGM
- Constitution – Review and the use of electronic updates
- Member & Group briefings
- Future work programme
 - Code of Corporate Governance
 - WAO feedback on “Member Engagement and Scrutiny”
 - Members’ Charter
 - Review of Constitution
 - Schedule of meetings
 - Member training – format and content

The following areas were discussed in further detail:

Chairs Reporting to the Fire Authority: Members agreed that Chairs of Committees should formally present the minutes of their meetings to the Fire Authority including any reports requiring Fire Authority approval arising from the minutes. It was suggested that specific training would be helpful in this respect and would give Chairs a sense of ownership of their Committee.

Staff Changes and Appointments: Members asked if they could receive information on new Senior Officer appointments/staff changes within their own Command areas and it was proposed that Members receive an information leaflet pertaining to staff changes within their area.

Task and Finish Groups: The Clerk made reference to the Task and Finish Groups required to undertake Scrutiny Reviews on behalf of PRAC and Efficiency Reviews from the Resources Committee. He highlighted the difficulty that had been experienced in arranging these meetings given Members’ other commitments, although dates had now been agreed.

Timing of Meetings: Following the results of a Member survey on the timing of meetings, it was agreed that meetings that did not require a pre meeting would commence at 10.00am, and those with a pre meeting would commence at 11.00am, with the pre meeting at 10.00am. This would also allow for a short group meeting if required.

Sustainability: Members had received a presentation on Sustainability at their Training Day on 5th November and had agreed an Environmental Statement in September 2007. They were informed that a baseline review of the Services’ impact on the environment was due to be undertaken shortly. A Sustainability Member Champion was required and a letter asking for Member nominations would shortly be circulated.

Committee Structure: Members were happy with the current Committee Structure being continued after the Annual General Meeting.

Constitution: New Members would received a hard copy of the Constitution whilst existing / continuing members would be alerted to any changes or updates either electronically or by hard copy, dependent on their preference. It was noted that an abridged version would be included in the Member Handbook.

Member and Group Briefings: The Clerk mentioned that the Budget briefing meetings which had been specifically requested by Members had been poorly attended, and asked for suggestions as to how to emphasise to Members the importance of these events. It was suggested that the importance of such events be stressed in the letter informing Members of such events.

Attendance at the Fire Authority briefing meetings were discussed and it was suggested that only the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority together with the Chairs of Committees and the Group Leaders be invited to attend in future.

Future Work Programme: The Clerk provided an overview of the Future Work Programme of the Working Group.

Meeting Etiquette: Councillor Theophilus expressed concerns that on occasions he had noted that due respect was not shown to the Chair during meetings and asked that training be provided to all Members on meeting etiquette as part of the induction training. This would in turn lead to the more efficient conduct of business.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The above items be approved and adopted

5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The provisional date of the next meeting was agreed as Monday 25th February 2008