

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



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

**COFNODION CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR  
ADOLYGU AC ARCHWILIO PERFFORMIAD  
MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND  
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**DYDD LLUN, 27 EBRILL 2009  
MONDAY, 27 APRIL 2009**

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

**11.00AM – 12.30PM**

**PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: P James

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: J Dudley

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: C Philpott, J Holmes, R  
Lewis, JJJ Davies

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES C Morgan, T Tudor, G Phillips, P  
Llewellyn

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: A Howells, P Bates, R Rees, D Swan,  
S Bryant, B Bassett, E Aitken, G Lloyd,  
J Weston, M Thomas, H Thomas

**1. DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTEREST**

None were declared.

**2 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2009 were received and approved as a true record, subject to the following amendment:

Item 6, paragraph 5 to be amended to reflect that a request had been made for the Welsh Performance Indicator reports to be expressed in numerical format *in addition* to percentages.

The Chair reported that although the Authority's submission entry for the Municipal Journal Local Government Achievement Awards 2009 was unsuccessful, the Authority had received a commendation. The Director for Operational Risk reported that this was an exceptional achievement and noted that Mid and West Wales were the only Fire Authority in Great Britain to be commended.

**3 TO RECEIVE THE JOINT RISK ASSESSMENT FROM THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE**

Mr John Weston, Performance Project Manager, Wales Audit Office was welcomed to the meeting. He presented the Authority's Joint Risk Assessment for 2008/2009.

The report summarised the key issues to have emerged from the updated JRA which was now based on the Assembly Government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales. The risks and priorities identified through the Joint Risk Assessment (JRA) process would inform the Authority's annual Improvement Plan, Risk Reduction Plan and Regulatory Plan. Key findings of the report were as follows:

- The Authority had made progress in reducing the levels of operational risk identified by the Peer Assessment Team (PAT) and were working to further improve the operational response of the Service. The PAT reported that employees were optimistic and enthusiastic and had a clear understanding of the corporate vision and objectives of the organisation.
- The Authority had made progress in reducing the level of risk identified in the last Joint Risk Assessment. In particular, the six high level risk areas had been reduced to medium risk.
- The Authority would face further risks in respect of financial pressures, achieving service standards, improving procurement, climate change, resilience and the retained duty system.

Reference was made to the Authority's success in achieving the WLGA Bronze Level for member development, the internal review of its control room arrangements, management of sickness absence and the development of the FSEC model.

Members were pleased to note the positive outcome of the report and extended their gratitude to Mr John Weston.

#### **4 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE OF SERVICE DELIVERY FOR 2009**

Consideration was given to a report detailing the Operational Assurance Process for 2009.

Following the Wales Programme for Improvement Fire Steering Group meeting on 26th March 2009, proposals were submitted to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government regarding the approach to Operational Assurance in the future. The Minister had agreed the proposals discussed at the meeting, that:-

- Operational Assurance in 2009/10 would be undertaken using a revised toolkit;
- Fire and Rescue Authorities would complete a full self assessment against all 7 Key Lines of Enquiry contained in the revised toolkit. All findings of the self assessment would be added to the Service Actions Database;
- Peer Assessment would examine 2 Key Lines of Enquiry, Health & Safety and Training & Development;
- A wider review of the Operational Assurance process would be undertaken by Paul Young, the Fire and Rescue Service Adviser for Wales as part of the review of Wales Programme for Improvement guidance later this year, with a view to introducing any changes in 2010/11.

The Performance Officer reported that the Peer Assessment Team were scheduled to be on site in early autumn.

#### **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted*

#### **5 TO RECEIVE THE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT APRIL 2008 – MARCH 2009**

Members gave consideration to the performance management report, which highlighted objectives in individual business plans that were currently off target.

Members drew their attention to the following issues:

The issue of skill gaps within commands was found to be a common thread and although some commands reported as being off target, this was due to commands setting ambitious reduction targets. Overall, the Service had reduced its skill gap by 2800 for the reporting year.

An insufficient number of retained duty system personnel were able to provide operational cover during daytime hours within Neath & Port Talbot County Command. The Command had undertaken a number of initiatives to address this and predicted that it would take 15 months to return to acceptable performance. The Director for Operational Risk assured Members that contingencies were in place to cover crew shortfalls and agreed to liaise with the Neath & Port Talbot County Commander to reduce the timescales involved in improving performance. Members welcomed an update to be provided at the next meeting.

A discussion ensued on the HFSC process and Members were informed that a review was currently underway to investigate alternative mechanisms of undertaking safety checks. The review would highlight the most effective and cost efficient delivery methods. Cllr Cheryl Philpott reported that Members would welcome further information regarding the HFSC process, which could possibly be scrutinised, and looked forward to seeing the review.

Members were pleased to note an improvement in the number of Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) undertaken. Members also welcomed the proactive measures undertaken to further reduce the number of Automatic Fire Alarms which had contributed to Service performance exceeding the Welsh average.

Overall Members noted that good progress had been made with the majority of objectives within the business plans being achieved.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted*

### **6 TO RECEIVE THE WELSH PERFORMANCE INDICATOR MANAGEMENT REPORT – APRIL – MARCH 2009**

Consideration was given to the report on Wales Performance Indicators which formed part of the Service's Performance Management reporting methodology. The report reflected a positive year's performance, particularly when considering the challenging targets that were set.

It was noted that this was the first year Services in Wales had been able to report on these new indicators and, as had previously been agreed with the Welsh Assembly Government, the Service had calculated indicator values retrospectively for 2007/08 in order to provide comparison data where possible.

A particularly challenging target was the percentage of female firefighters, although the Service was nearly 2% higher than that of the Welsh average and showed an improvement on the last quarter and 2007/08. The Performance Officer reported that the Service employ 4.59% of female firefighters, the highest figure in Wales.

Although it was noted that 9 of the indicators were showing a negative trend, it was difficult to draw significant conclusions on this data as it was the first year that these indicators had been applied to the Service.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted*

**7 TO RECEIVE AN INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT ON THE MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE DEBTORS REVIEW**

Mr Meirwyn Thomas, from Carmarthenshire County Council's Internal Audit Department, presented the Service's debtor review for 2008/2009. The review sought to provide assurance that the Authority had established policies and procedures in order that all credit income was collected in full and accurately recorded in the Financial Management Systems.

Recommendations detailed within the Action Plan were discussed and it was reported that implementation of these proposals would strengthen existing controls.

Director of Resources and Procurement endorsed the report, noting that procedural documentation would provide personnel with clear guidance in undertaking their roles.

Mr Huw Thomas reported that the programme for 2009/2010 would be mutually agreed with the Director of Resources and Procurement and a report would be submitted to the Committee's next meeting.

**RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted*

**8 TO RECEIVE AN INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT ON THE MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE PROCUREMENT REVIEW**

Mr Huw Thomas, from Carmarthenshire County Council's Internal Audit Department presented the follow up review of the Internal Audit Report on Procurement. The objective of the audit was to ensure that the action plan of the procurement review 2007/08 had been implemented. This was achieved by evaluating the adequacy of procurement procedures, ensuring the action plan had been fully implemented and ensuring that roles and objectives were clear. Members were pleased to note such a positive report, with all recommendations being addressed.

**RESOLUTION**

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

**9a TO RECEIVE AN INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT ON THE MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REVIEW OF CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 2008/09**

Mr Huw Thomas reported that Audit testing found that, generally, Corporate Governance within the Authority was well managed and in line with the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework and there were many examples of good Governance arrangements. There were a number of minor weaknesses identified where controls were not operating in line with the Framework and a total of 13 recommendations had been made to address these issues.

## RESOLUTION

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

### 9b TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The Clerk stated that the Authority had adopted the Code of Corporate Governance in 2008 as a matter of good practice in readiness for what would ultimately be a statutory requirement for the 2009/10 Accounts.

Accordingly the Annual Governance Statement would be included in the Statement of Accounts for 2008/09, replacing the requirement for the Statement of Internal Control.

The Good Governance structure had enabled the Authority to pursue its vision effectively and also underpinned that vision with the mechanisms for the control and management of risk to support the overall strategic direction of the Authority.

The review highlighted a number of minor weaknesses where controls were not yet operating in line with the framework. These were being addressed and were either currently being implemented or were in the process of being implemented early in 2009/10.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

*Committee recommends to the Fire Authority the adoption of the Statement of Assurance.*

### 10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ANALYSIS OCTOBER 2008 – MARCH 2009

Consideration was given to the 6 monthly update on complaints and compliments received during the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.

A total of 9 complaints (including 1 anonymous complaint which are not monitored officially, however are included for information) and a total of 57 compliments were received. The previous 6 month reporting period April 2008- September 2008 reported 10 complaints and 60 compliments.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted*