

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
23 EBRILL / APRIL 2009 10:00 – 11:50**

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

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: J Dudley

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs., P Llewellyn, R Llewellyn,
C J Crowley, P James, T E Evans

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: C Philpott, M Williams

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: A Howells, B Bassett, L Aitken
(agenda item 5), K Jones (agenda
item 5)

1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared.

2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS

None were declared.

3 TO CONFIRM AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MODERNISATION WORKING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2008 AND 18 NOVEMBER 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 13TH October 2008 and 18th November 2008 were received and confirmed as a true record. The Clerk noted that all recommendations put forth by the Modernisation Working Group had been endorsed by the Fire Authority and reflected in an updated constitution document. Publication of the Constitution had been made available via electronic means (website, Business Information Server and CD Rom upon request) and a small number of hard copies would be made available for members' use prior to meetings should the need so arise..

4 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE ANTI FRAUD AND CORRUPTION AND WHISTLEBLOWING POLICIES

Given that the Authority's Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy is closely linked to other policies that the Committee were responsible for, Members considered it appropriate to review both the Anti Fraud and Corruption and the Whistle Blowing policies together.

It was noted that departmental responsibility for the documents had been revised to reflect a more logical placement within the governance structure. The Director of Resources and Procurement would have overall responsibility for the Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy whereas the Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development would be accountable for the Whistleblowing Policy.

Members were informed that the policies had been reviewed by the Standards Committee on 16th April 2009.

Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy

The Director of Resources and Procurement introduced the Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy handbook, detailing the arrangements for preventing and deterring fraud and corruption and detecting and investigating any actual suspected cases. The strategy covered Culture, Prevention, Detection and Investigation, Training, Response Plan and Codes of Conduct.

It was emphasised that the policy strengthened what was expected from personnel in terms of culture i.e. positively encouraging employees to come forward to report incidents of fraud or corruption with anonymity being upheld where possible, if requested.

Members were further informed that the format of the document had been standardised in order to reflect uniformity in terms of presentation. The Corporate Head of Communication and Member Support would also be producing a policy on Policies; this would ensure that all policies were up to date and that policies were reviewed in a timely manner.

A discussion ensued on the Service's Tendering process. The Director of Resources and Procurement reported that the Service aims to fully and openly tender all of its contracts. In relation to construction projects the Authority utilised Constructionline, which is the Government's national register of pre-qualified construction related suppliers, to identify shortlists of suppliers. In response to a question in relation to member involvement in the opening of tenders, it was noted that the Clerk to the Fire Authority had responsibility for overseeing this process on behalf of the Fire Authority. Members were assured that stringent processes were followed when opening tenders.

Reference was made to the ordering of goods and services whereby Members were pleased to note the computerised ordering system that was in place within the Service as this was a means of producing an audit trail if required.

Identity Theft was also discussed which highlighted the importance of rigorous procedures when issuing and returning fire kit and uniform, as well as personnel identity badges.

Whistleblowing Policy

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development presented the Authority's Whistleblowing policy which was intended to encourage and enable staff, or those providing services under contract within the Service, to disclose concerns with regard to malpractice or not complying with legislation. It was noted that issues relating to policies and procedures would be dealt with under grievance procedures. The policy was designed to reassure staff that they would be protected from reprisals or victimisation for raising concerns in good faith and was in keeping with legislation. The policy also provides support if guidance is requested to raise a concern and ensures a consistent and sensitive handling of concerns raised.

Members highlighted that the policy was a reminder that personnel are encouraged to disclose malpractice, however it also emphasised that if malicious or vexatious allegations were made and found to be untrue then disciplinary procedures may be instigated.

RESOLUTION

It be recommended that

the Fire and Rescue Authority endorse the Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy.

the above policies be reviewed in three years time and as a matter of good practice all Authority policies should be reviewed within a prescribed timescale.

5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Following a review of departmental structures within the Authority, the Human Resources and Learning & Development departments had been merged to form the People and Organisational Development Department. Accordingly the terms of reference of the People and Organisational Development Committee and the Modernisation Working Group needed to be amended to reflect this change.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. The Committee recommends to the Fire and Rescue Authority the proposed changes to the People and Organisational Development Committee's terms of reference.*
- 2. The Committee recommends to the Fire and Rescue Authority the proposed changes to the Modernisation Working Group Committee's terms of reference.*

6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

The Head of Corporate Communication and Member Support reported that the Fire Authority were successful in attaining the bronze level of the Wales Charter for Member Support & Development for Fire Authorities in October 2008.

Areas of notable practice and areas requiring development were discussed. These areas would be incorporated into the Service's planning for applying for the Silver advanced level of the Charter in 2010. It was noted that a meeting has taken place with the WLGA to agree Fire Authority criteria for the advanced level and progress was ongoing.

North Wales FRS would be applying the bronze status of the Charter in Summer 2009.

Additionally, the WLGA had agreed that Jacqui Maunder and Cllr Cheryl Philpott would be trained in June 2009 as assessors to undertake WCMSD assessments within English and Welsh Local Authorities following their involvement in MWWFRA's application.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted.

7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF FA BUSINESS QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of the Service's commitment to continuous improvement a Fire Authority Business Questionnaire was issued to all Members in November 2008, the purpose of which was to consult Members on preferences for meeting times, locations for meetings, accessibility issues and dietary requirements. Results showed that, overall, Members:

- Were satisfied with the current time and location for Fire Authority and Committee meetings.
- Were satisfied with papers being issued via hard copy for Fire Authority meetings
- Would like more member participation, i.e. Members presenting reports to Fire Authority/committees
- Would like consideration be given to issuing Committee meeting papers via e-

- mail/cd
- Would like Members to be prompted to use the simultaneous Welsh language translation system at Fire Authority meetings

It was reported that Authority Meetings were geared around specific requirements e.g. RRP in October each year and that the Authority had a cycle of Committee meetings based around Authority meetings. It was noted that the Service should attempt, if possible, to schedule committee meetings more evenly in future. Another questionnaire would be issued following the Fire Authority AGM in June 2009.

RESOLUTION:

It was resolved that:

That Members accept the evaluation report.

It be recommended that the Service attempt to schedule committee meetings more evenly in future.

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWS

The Head of Corporate Communication and Member Support reported that the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development for Fire Authorities stated that Members receive personal development interviews to assess their personal development requirements and identify relevant training opportunities.

The Charter stated that only the Chair and Vice Chair of the Fire Authority were required to undertake a PDI, however to demonstrate the Fire Authority's commitment to Member development it was agreed that all members undergo an interview.

To date 18 out of 25 Members had been interviewed. It was envisaged that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Fire Authority would undergo another interview following the AGM in June 2009 and the remaining Members would undergo an annual assessment in February 2010. A training programme for 2009/10 would also be issued to Members following the AGM.

RESOLUTION:

It was resolved that:

That Members accept the report on The Personal Development Interviews.