

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



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

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE  
PERFORMANCE, REVIEW AND AUDIT COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING ON  
30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2009

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

**DYDD LLUN, 12 HYDREF 2009  
MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2009**

**PENCADLYS Y GWASANAETH TÂN  
HEOL LLWYN PISGWYDD, CAERFYRDDIN**

**FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS,  
LIME GROVE AVENUE, CARMARTHEN**

**11.00AM – 12.45PM**

**80% 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: JJJ Davies, J Holmes, E  
Kirchner, P Llewellyn, C Philpott,  
T Tudor

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES B Hynes, R Lewis

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: A Howells, P Coleman, K Jones,  
S Bryant, S Flather

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

None were declared.

## **2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS**

The Chair welcomed Councillor J Dudley back to the Authority following a period of illness.

Members were provided with an update regarding a tragic fire incident that occurred in the early hours of Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at Lloyd Street, Llanelli. DCFO Coleman confirmed that crews arrived at the scene 5 minutes after the call was received, however, unfortunately a male casualty had been fatally injured.

## **3 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2009**

The Chair wished to record his thanks to Councillor C Philpott who had taken the Chair at the last meeting in the absence of both himself and the Vice Chair Councillor J Dudley.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009 were received and approved as a true record, subject to the following amendment:

*Item 10: Consultation on proposed amendments to the accounts and audit regulations* - The Head of Finance requested that the term 'section' in paragraphs 3 and 4 be replaced with 'area' for clarity.

### Matters Arising from the Minutes of the PRAC Meeting Held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009

The Head of Finance drew attention to Item 3, paragraph 2 relating to the internal Audit Programme for 2009/10. Members were informed that the programme had now been finalised and a report would be presented to the next ordinary meeting of the Performance, Review and Audit Committee held on Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

Reference was made to item 6, resolution 2: Business Performance Management Report April-June 2009. The minutes stated that an overview of Personal, Professional Development Reviews and Skill Gaps would be reported at Directorate Level at the next committee meeting. The Clerk reminded Members that today's meeting was a special meeting held specifically to consider the Improvement Plan element of the Annual Action and Improvement Plan and that scheduled reports and the quarterly performance data would be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Performance, Review and Audit Committee held on Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

The Chair highlighted item 9 of the minutes relating to the forward work plan for scrutiny – nominations for membership. Committee was reminded of the importance of such scrutiny exercises to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the Service.

Members were therefore encouraged to provide nominations for the remaining scrutiny exercises for 2009/10. A discussion ensued on current meeting arrangements in terms of meeting location, times, duration and venues etc. The Clerk confirmed that a questionnaire would be issued to all Members shortly to ensure that accessibility arrangements met the needs of Members.

Members reported that the visit to the facilities at Earlswood attended at the end of 2008 had been both informative and enjoyable. It was therefore recommended that another visit to Earlswood and Service Control be scheduled into the Training & Events Programme for 2009/10.

#### **4 TO CONSIDER THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN ELEMENT OF THE ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

Members were aware that the Improvement Plan for 2009/2010 was reported jointly along with the Annual Action Plan for 2010/2011.

Group Manager Karen Jones presented Members with an overview of the Improvement Plan, which reported on the Service's Welsh Performance Indicators for 2008/2009, as well as the Operational Assurance Assessment and Joint Risk Assessment. A Financial summary and an Efficiency Gains report was also provided.

Members were informed that the Risk Reduction Planning Member Working group had completed their consideration of the Annual Action Plan at its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2009 and both documents would be presented to the Fire Authority on the 26<sup>th</sup> October.

#### **Welsh Performance Indicators**

Members were informed that the Welsh Assembly Government's strategic performance indicators for 2008/2009 were reported in the Improvement Plan along with a commentary on performance. In addition, some of the core indicators were also provided to expand on the Authority's performance in areas of Corporate Health.

Councillor C Philpott drew attention to the rise in the number of chimney fires. Members expressed the view that, given the current economic climate and the bringing back into use of coal/wood burning fires, it would be pertinent to raise awareness within communities of the need to sweep flues before fireplaces were brought back into use. Members concluded that a press release would prove beneficial to remind members of the public to regularly sweep chimneys. Committee also suggested that local and national suppliers should be approached to ask them to make this recommendation, as well when selling/installing related equipment.

Upon scrutiny of the Effective Response Indicator concerns were raised that the data in relation to the 10 minute Service Standard (FRS/EFR/001) could be misinterpreted. Members expressed the view that the indicator was flawed as it did not take into account a number of variables, including response at normal road speed to unwanted fire alarm signals and time spent off station on community safety work. Group Manager Karen Jones assured Members that the Service's concerns in relation to the validity of the indicator had been acknowledged by the Welsh Assembly Government and a review of this Service Standard is currently ongoing, with each Fire and Rescue Service represented on the review panel. Members resolved to replace the term 'each' with 'our' within the indicator for clarity.

Reference was made to false alarms by automatic alarm systems whereby Members noted the significant progress made by staff during the past few months to reduce this type of incidents that would hopefully be reflected in next year's statistics.

Members were pleased to note the significant reduction in the number of all deliberate fires, much of the success of which could be attributed to the arson reduction work within communities. A discussion ensued on the smoke alarm ownership indicator whereby Officers resolved to review the commentary to avoid any possible misinterpretation by members of the public.

### **Improvement Information**

Members were informed that this section of the document would report on the results of the Operational Assurance Assessment of Service Delivery and Joint Risk Assessment undertaken with the Wales Audit Office. The medium risks were listed along with the Authority's actions in response to these risks. Members requested that a paragraph be incorporated within this section to reflect that the Service would endeavour to promote partnership working to further improve access to high risk groups.

A Financial Summary of the Service's funding and anticipated spend for 2009/10 was provided along with a summary of Efficiency Gains achieved over previous years and planned for 2009/2010. Members were assured that the content of the Improvement Plan was in accordance with WPI Guidance.

Group Manager Karen Jones reported that the plan would be further developed to incorporate some minor amendments prior to the Fire Authority's consideration at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

- 1. The Improvement Plan 2009-2010 be revised to incorporate minor amendments and subsequently approved for consideration by the Fire Authority alongside the Annual Action Plan 2010-2011 on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009.***
  - 2. A press release be published and local/national suppliers be contacted to raise awareness within communities of the need to sweep flues***
- 5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WORKFORCE PLANNING & POWYS COUNTY COMMAND SCRUTINY EXERCISES HELD 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2009 AND 14<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009**

Group Manager Steve Bryant introduced a report on the Workforce Planning and Powys County Command scrutiny exercises which formed part of the forward work plan previously agreed by the Committee.

### Workforce Planning

Scrutiny Members were satisfied that the Service was committed to the training and development of staff, with employee safety and welfare of paramount importance at all times. They were pleased to note that the current disparity in the recruitment of wholetime and retained duty system (RDS) personnel would be resolved by the availability of the National Firefighter Selection Tests to personnel conditioned to both duty systems, and that an infrastructure was being developed that would allow RDS personnel who had successfully completed their ADC to apply for wholetime duty system posts at supervisory level.

The need for the Service to continue to emphasise the importance of the Personal Performance & Development Review (PPDR) process in staff development was stressed by Members, and that work should continue to overcome logistical difficulties in undertaking the process. It was highlighted that whilst the Service fully supported the development of its staff, budgetary constraints had to be considered.

Members were reassured by the Service's emphasis on the provision of risk critical training which covered a range a range of skills and competencies in relation to relevant operational scenarios and risks.

As a result of the scrutiny exercise and the subsequent evaluation documentation received from Members, the following recommendations were made:

1. Ensure the suitable provision of assessors to support NVQ candidates.
2. Continue to emphasise the importance of the Personal Performance & Development Review (PPDR) process.
3. Ensure the Services' risk critical training programme is maintained and progressed.
4. Develop the integration of recruitment and development policies and procedures for wholetime and RDS personnel.

### Powys County Command

Scrutiny Members noted that officers were working to ensure the Service's Personal Professional Development Review (PPDR) process was being complied for all members of staff and that the challenges presented in the Retained Duty System (RDS) sector were being dealt with.

Members were interested to note that the Command was proactive alternative funding where appropriate and engaged in partnerships to assist with and maximise its risk reduction work, which contributed to the Command's business planning process, linked to the Service's corporate objectives.

Members acknowledged that Powys Command recognised the benefits of taking relevant opportunities to connect with its communities to ensure its safety initiatives are made available to all of its communities.

As a result of the scrutiny exercise and the subsequent evaluation documentation received from Members, the following recommendations were made:

1. Consider the production of an aide memoir to assist staff with the PPDR process.
2. Progress funding applications where appropriate with Community Safety Partnerships and other suitable potential funding sources.
3. Provide details of youth engagement courses and similar community events to relevant Members where appropriate to ensure they are effectively briefed on Command activities.
4. Investigate the potential for utilising a motorbike for RTC reduction and similar initiatives.
5. Command to continue to actively promote HFSCs in local town and community areas.
6. The Head of Powys County Command to liaise with Members and relevant Officers to allow Members to visit stations within their areas.

Members concluded that both scrutiny exercises had been robust and thorough, and were satisfied that resources were concentrated in specific areas of need and that all scrutiny focus areas had been addressed.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

***Committee accept the Workforce Planning and Powys County Command Scrutiny Exercise Reports and the recommendations contained therein..***

### **6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY (KLOE) FOR THE PEER ASSESSMENT VISIT TO FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS**

Members were provided with an update on the Wales Programme for Improvement with regard to the Operational Assurance Process and the Key Lines of Enquiry self-assessments prepared by the Service.

Group Manager Karen Jones reported that the Operational Assurance Process for 2009 / 2010 had been undertaken using a revised toolkit, which was agreed by the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government following the Wales Programme for Improvement Fire Steering Group meeting on 26th March 2009. Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales completed a full self-assessment against all 7 Key Lines of Enquiry contained in the revised toolkit.

The Service received its Peer Assessment visit during the week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009, which was led by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The Peer Assessment Team examined two Key Lines of Enquiry – Health & Safety and Training & Development which involved wide ranging examination of the Service.

Members noted that the Peer Assessment Team would be compiling a report on the Service's Self-Assessment within the next 2-3 weeks, with recommendations on areas for development provided for consideration.

Members were informed that the remaining five Key Lines of Enquiry would be forwarded to Welsh Assembly Government in accordance with the Wales Fire and Rescue Service Circular. The functional areas would include Community Risk Management, Prevention, Protection, Response and Call Management and Incident Support.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

***Members accept the report and endorse the process outlined within.***

## **7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON FIRES IN THE HOME 2008: RESULTS FROM THE LIVING IN WALES SURVEY**

Group Manager Karen Jones reported that information on fire and fire safety had been published following the Welsh Assembly Government's *'Living in Wales'* Survey undertaken in 2008. Members noted that these results compared very favourably with previous *'Living in Wales'* surveys and other national surveys.

It was stressed that some results were based on a small number of responses but the survey did provide a valuable source of additional information to evidence the value of the Service's community safety strategies.

Committee considered Fires in the Home statistics whereby Members were pleased to note an increase in the number of people reporting a fire to the Fire and Rescue Service. This could be attributed to the positive profile of the Service, together with the preventative advice provided, which encouraged an increase in the number of fires reported.

Information was also provided on the type of household most at risk of incidence of fire. Group manager Karen Jones reported that the data confirmed that the Service was targeting the appropriate areas and work should continue to be developed in these areas.

Councillor J Dudley noted that developing partnerships to reach Children and Young Adults was an area that would need to be further progressed. DCFO Coleman assured Members that the Service would continue to strive to make progress with this risk group.

The percentage of homes without a working smoke alarm had reduced to 10% of all households, an improvement from 2004 when 14% of households were without a working smoke alarm. Smoke alarm ownership, and mains powered alarms was higher than average for social rented housing, and this reflected joint strategies to target the fitting of smoke alarms to higher risk groups.

The results of this study evidenced the success of the Authority's Community Safety strategies in providing home fire safety checks and advice on fire safety in the home. Members were gratified to note such a positive report and requested that current strategies continue to further develop this work.

### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that***

***Members note the contents of the report and the positive impact of the Authority's Community Safety strategies on fires and fire safety.***

## **8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEASURE**

Members were provided with an update on the development of the Local Government Measure which became law on 22 June 2009. Members were informed that the Local Government Measure Fire will apply from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. The first Wales Audit Office assessment would be the forward looking element examining the likelihood that the Authority will improve. This assessment would be based on the whole organisation's self assessment of non-operational issues carried out previously. The backward looking review will be carried out in the autumn of 2010 and would comprise a review of the Performance Indicator actuals and the Service's Improvement Plan.

Committee endorsed the planning process and requested further updates as progress is made towards the implementation phase.

### **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that the report be received for information.*

## **9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDIT AND INSPECTION FEES 2009-10**

Consideration was given to a letter from the Auditor General concerning the Local Government Audit and Inspection Fees for 2009/10. The Head of Finance highlighted that the Authority and Wales Audit Office had agreed a 'fee envelope' for the year which was determined on the basis of work necessary to discharge audit, studies and inspection responsibilities following an assessment of complexity and other local circumstances. It was noted that the actual fees to be paid would be negotiated with KPMG. Members were informed that the fees paid for 2008/2009 were £55,000.

Committee concluded that initial reports relating to inspection fees need not be considered by Members in future.

### **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

- 1. The report be received for information.*
- 2. Initial reports relating to Local Government Audit and Inspection Fees need not be considered by Members in future.*