

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



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

**COFNODION
CYFARFOD YR AWDURDOD**

Ganolfan Gynadledda,
Pencadlys Y Gwasanaeth Tân Ac Achub, Caerfyrddin
29 MEHEFIN 2009

**MINUTES
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Conference Centre,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
29 JUNE 2009

11.05am – 12.25pm

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: E Evans
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: C Philpott

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: R Ll. Smith, M Williams, J Holmes, G Thomas, D Thomas, D Davies, R Llewellyn, J J J Davies, J Newbury, A Jopling, P Llewellyn, E Kirchner, B Hynes, F Torrens, P James, S Lloyd-Janes, A Woolcock

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: J Dinham, F Torrens, A P Davies, J Dudley, R Lewis, D Fellows

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: R Smith, P Coleman, A Howells, P Bates, W Edwards, E Aitken, K Jones, S Flather, B Bassett

1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared.

2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/PERSONAL MATTERS

None were declared.

3 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETINGS HELD ON 11th MAY 2009 AND 3rd JUNE 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th May 2009 were confirmed and approved as a true record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd June 2009 were confirmed and approved as a true record. Councillor P James asked for clarification on item 7, paragraph 4 relating to Community Safety Partnerships. Deputy Chief Fire Officer Phil Coleman elucidated that only Fire Service Officers represented the Authority on the Community Safety Partnerships within each Constituent Authority; this was due to the fact that each Partnership was set up differently.

The Clerk to the Fire Authority drew attention to item 8 of the minutes which referred to the Graduation Ceremony for new Firefighter Recruits. It was noted that the date of the ceremony needed to be changed from the 14th September to 17th September 2009 and Members would receive official notification in due course.

4 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 15TH JUNE 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2009 were confirmed and approved as a true record.

Councillor P James drew attention to item 14 which referred to the refinements approved by the POD committee to departmental structures. Deputy Chief Fire Officer P Coleman confirmed that the references of Senior Managers would be realigned slightly, however all changes would remain containable within current budget.

5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS – ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS

Members were reminded that the appointment to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer was an Authority appointment.

As in the case of previous appointments at this level the posts had been advertised throughout all UK Fire and Rescue Services via the Fire Internetworking Data Service (FINDS).

Members were advised that the following timetable was being used for the appointment

process:

Monday 22 June 2009	-	Advertisement
Monday 13 July 2009	-	Closing date for applications
Wednesday 22 July 2009	-	Short-Listing Panel
Friday 24 July 2009		Psychometric Testing and Chief Fire Officer Interviews
Monday 27 July 2009	-	Fire Authority Interviews

With regard to the composition of the Short-listing Panel, Members noted that representation had previously consisted of the

- Chair of the Authority
- Vice Chair of the Authority
- Chair of each of the three Standing Committees
- Leaders of the Independent and Labour Groups
- Chief Fire Officer
- Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
- Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development or Head of Human Resources

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members agree:

- 1) The timetable for the appointment process, and***
- 2) The composition of Members to serve on the Short-Listing Panel***

6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to two new Members, namely Councillors Erika Kirchner and Barbara J Hynes who had been appointed to replace Councillors Glyn Seabourne and Grenville Phillips on the Fire Authority. The Chairman took the opportunity to formally recognise the contributions made by Councillors Glyn Seabourne and Grenville Phillips during their term of office and requested letters of appreciation be sent to them on behalf of all Members.

The Authority was required to appoint Members to fill the resultant vacancies as follows :

- Performance Review & Audit Committee – 2 seats (formerly Councillors G Seabourne & G Phillips)
- People & Organisational Development Committee – 1 seat (formerly Councillor G Phillips)
- Resources Committee – 2 seats (formerly Councillors G Seabourne & G Phillips)

To maintain political balance, the above appointments needed to be from the Labour Group.

Additionally there was also a vacancy on the Authority's Standards Committee (seat formerly held by Cllr. Glyn Seabourne). Members noted that the appointment would be for a four year period to 28th June 2013 and did not need to reflect political balance on the Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1) Councillors B Hynes and E Kirchner be appointed to the Performance Review & Audit Committee**
- 2) Councillor E Kirchner be appointed to the People & Organisational Development Committee**
- 3) Councillors A Woolcock and E Kirchner be appointed to the Resources Committee**
- 4) Councillor R. Ll. Smith be appointed to the Standards Committee for a four year term of office**

7 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON THE AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES WITHIN CEREDIGION AND NEATH & PORT TALBOT COUNTY COMMANDS

Assistant Chief Fire Officer P Bates introduced a report on the management of unwanted fire signals. He welcomed Station Manager Iwan Cray, Ceredigion County Command, and Group Manager Steve McLinden, Neath & Port Talbot County Command, to the meeting to present two notable examples of initiatives undertaken throughout the Service of effective action taken to reduce the number of automatic fire alarms.

Station Manager Cray reported that 97% of all automatic fire alarm activations were unwanted signals. These were a considerable drain on the Service's resources, placed unnecessary risks to firefighters and the public, and diverted resources away from actual emergency conditions.

Members were provided with an overview of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth which had received 380 activations of their fire alarm system in 2007/08. Of these activations only 21 were found to be actual incidents. This led to student dissatisfaction, complacency, high number of malicious activations and reduced monitoring and enforcement. The Service therefore undertook a comparison study to investigate University practices across the UK in order to develop a way forward. Best practice could be found at the University of Nottingham. An Action Plan was then

implemented to reduce the number of unwanted fire signals within the University of Wales. Initiatives included Freshers' talks, CCTV, implementing financial penalties to students, additional ventilation, domestic detectors in kitchens etc. These have seen significant reductions in the number automatic fire alarms and statistics continue to show positive results.

Group Manager McLinden was introduced to the meeting in order to give an overview of the scale of the problem faced in Neath & Port Talbot Command. It was reported that 375 unwanted fire signals had been attended in the last 12 months, of which 33 had resulted in an actual fire. Case studies of Tonna Hospital and Sheltered Housing Schemes were presented to Members as these buildings had been identified as 'high offenders' within the command. Initiatives to reduce the number of unwanted fire signals comprised of early intervention by means of site visits, accurate identification of issues causing concern, regular monthly reviews and educating members of the public in order to raise awareness. The command had realised a 78% reduction in the number of unwanted fire signals since 2002/03.

A question and answer session followed whereby Members enquired about the protocol for reducing unwanted fire signals in other Universities. Members were informed that all Commands were very proactive in driving down these statistics, and Swansea had adopted a similar system that is utilised by Aberystwyth. A discussion ensued on the financial penalties imposed on students, which was highlighted to all students in order to act as a deterrent. Members were further informed that the Service held an up to date list of all dangerous substances used within Universities.

Members enquired about the redeployment of crews and were informed that a 5 minute delay had been imposed before responding to automatic fire alarms. This enabled a nominated person to determine whether or not an alarm activation was an unwanted fire signal in order to notify the alarm centre accordingly. Members were pleased to note that this process was working well.

Councillor M Williams drew attention to the Non Domestic AFA graphical chart and noted the increase in the number of calls received since 2000. Members were informed that the rise was due to an increase in the number of systems that had been installed over the years. The Service was confident, however, that the new approach taken by the organisation would see significant reductions in the number of calls received.

Members concluded that they were delighted with the report and commended Officers in the significant reduction of unwanted fire signals which had led to considerable financial savings to the Fire Service.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Members receive and note the report and presentation on the Management of Unwanted Fire Signals.

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON AN AWARD PRESENTED TO FIREFIGHTER PAUL DYSON, STATION 36, PEMBROKE DOCK

Members were informed that on May 1st 2009, Firefighter Paul Dyson from Blue Watch, Pembroke Dock was presented with a Civic Award by Pembroke Town Council for his work with the Pembroke Dock branch of Young Firefighters.

Firefighter Dyson was nominated for the award by his colleagues at Pembroke Dock for his dedication to the Young Firefighters (YFF). Firefighter Dyson was instrumental in setting up the YFF branch and has provided continual leadership for the young people who attend the YFF. Furthermore, he has behaved as a positive role model for the young people in the best traditions of a modern Fire & Rescue Service.

To complement this Civic Award, Firefighter Dyson was also the first recipient of the recently created Award of Merit for outstanding commitment to the community of Pembroke Dock. This award was a complete surprise to Firefighter Dyson and was presented as a compliment for all the hard work the instructors and young people had carried out over the last three years as well as for his own work.

Councillor P Llewellyn reported that she had felt honoured to have represented the Authority in the presentation evening and was delighted with the award presented to Firefighter Dyson.

Members were also pleased to note that two Young Firefighters had been successful in their applications to join the Retained Duty System in Pembroke Dock and Morriston. In response to a question relating to Young Firefighter awards, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Coleman reported that both Members and Officers are invited to attend such events.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Members noted the achievements of Firefighter Dyson, as recognised by Pembroke Town Council by the presentation of the Civic Award and the Award of Merit. A letter acknowledging these achievements would be sent to Firefighter Dyson.

9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND PRESENTATION ON THE SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY FOR MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Head of Corporate Risk presented Members with a strategy document entitled 'A Sustainability and Environmental Strategy for Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service'. The document emanated as a result of the Service embarking on a scoping project in 2008 which reviewed its position in relation to the delivery of its service against both local and national sustainability and environmental standards. This review considered a number of relevant factors such as Energy, Waste, Recycling, Operational Equipment and Transport in order to provide the broadest overview

possible to gain maximum value. Two main objectives had emanated from the scoping project:

Achieve Green Dragon standard by 2013;
Attain an overall Level 3 standard within SPAF.

ACFO Paul Bates had been nominated as the Service's Director Champion for Sustainability & Environment and Councillor John Newbury was appointed from within the Fire Authority to Champion this new objective from a Member's perspective.

The Head of Corporate Risk outlined the purpose of the strategy and gave an overview of the key headings that would form the foundation of the Service's work in addressing aspects of Sustainability and Environmental management as follows:

- Sustainable Development of our Communities;
- Accountability for Supplies and Services;
- Water;
- Energy;
- Utility Management;
- Transport and Fleet Management;
- Travel Plan;
- Operational Activities: Firefighting / Rescue;
- Greenhouse Gases and Landfill Methane Emissions;
- Waste Management and Recycling;
- Bird and Wildlife Conservation;
- Biodiversity

Each of the above headings were given careful consideration to ensure that they reflected the Service's overall objectives plus, more importantly, the expected outcomes required to be realistic of the Service's capacity to address the areas within defined timescales.

The strategy would become a core feature of both Corporate and individual departmental business planning arrangements which would enable the aims and objectives to become integral in day to day processes avoiding them being adopted as 'bolt on' requirements.

In order to achieve this successfully, a campaign to bring this Strategy to the attention of all staff was due to commence in July 2009, followed by the development of a larger Sustainability Working Group involving key departments. Members would be kept informed of progress.

In response to a question from Councillor Lloyd-Janes regarding the Welsh Assembly Government's consultation paper on a Draft Water and Flood Management Bill Members were informed that Mid and West Wales were the lead for Wales on Flooding. Members were assured that the Service was fully aware of the consultation document and all related flooding procedures and would continue to be fully engaged with the Assembly.

A discussion ensued on Digester Systems and Members were informed that any risks posed would be dealt with appropriately.

Members commended Officers on producing a readable and concise document and noted that the publication of this Strategy would be a significant milestone in the Service's objective to meet its sustainability and environmental duties as a public authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The strategy document entitled ' A Sustainable and Environmental Strategy for Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service' be approved

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 200809

The Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2008/09 was presented to Members, subject to audit.

The Chair of the Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer would be required to sign and date both the Statement of Accounts and Statement of Assurance.

The Statement of Accounts (SOA) set out the financial standing of the Authority at 31st March 2009 and showed its financial performance during the financial year 2008/09. Members were reminded of the statutory requirement for the Authority to approve the unaudited SOA by 30th June 2009. The audit of the SOA would be completed by KPMG on behalf of the Wales Audit Office and the audited SOA would be presented to the Authority by 30th September 2009. As part of the audit process the unaudited accounts would be available for public inspection from 4th to 31st August 2009. After the 30th September the audited accounts would be published on the Authority's website and be available in printed copy to members of the public on request.

The Director of Resources and Procurement drew attention to the Statement of Assurance which was a culmination of all the work undertaken by the organisation during the financial year 2008/09. A review of the management and reporting arrangements allowed for both the Clerk to the Fire Authority and Director of Resources and Procurement to give assurance that its approach to Corporate Governance was both adequate and effective in practice.

Reference was also made to legislation which had been considered by the Welsh Local Government Association to allow for the direct holding of reserves. This legislation had the support of all interested parties and it was anticipated that this legislation would be enacted by November 2009.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1) The Fire and Rescue Authority approve the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2008/09**
- 2) The Statement of Accounts be signed by the Chair of the Authority**

11 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE EUROPEAN UNION – FLOOD EXERCISE 2009

An invitation had been received for the Service to be involved in a major EU Flooding Exercise hosted in the Netherlands in September 2009.

Members were aware that Officers from Mid and West Wales were the lead for Wales on flood rescue enhancements which formed part of a new national project set up by DEFRA to improve all aspects of flood related work following on from the publication of the Pitt Review into the summer 2007 floods.

The overall purpose of the exercise would be to:

- Test procedures for incoming international assistance
- Plan co-operation
- Test EU mechanism for civil protection
- Test EU civil protection assistance, including modules

Arrangements would be made for a Search and Rescue Team from Mid and West Wales to take part in the exercise which was a major international exercise to test the preparedness of rescue assets across Europe and more locally in Wales.

In addition to excellent practical experience of working within a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary module, team leaders from participating organisations would also be offered training and development ahead of the exercise, covering UK response arrangements and Command and Control protocols, and input on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and C&C systems. All costings for exercise, and associated training, would be funded by the European Union.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted.

12 ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Deputy Chief Fire Officer Coleman provided Members with brief details of an incident which occurred in Neath & Port Talbot County Command on 29th June 2009.