

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



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

**CYFARFOD O'R PWYLLGOR ADNODDAU
MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

DYDD LLUN, 13 GORFFENAF 2009

MONDAY, 13 JULY 2009

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

11.00 – 12.00

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:	R LI Smith
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:	G Thomas
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: T E Evans, J Newbury, M Williams, F Torrens, S Lloyd-Janes, E Kirchner, JJJ Davies
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Dinham, D Thomas, J Dudley, A Woolcock, D Davies
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	A Howells, R Smith, S Flather

1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTEREST

None were declared.

2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/PERSONAL MATTERS

Chief Fire Officer Smith informed the Committee of the tragic death of Firefighter Ewan Williamson, aged 35 from Lothian and Borders Fire & Rescue Service, Edinburgh. A letter of condolence had been sent on behalf of the Authority and Members stood as a sign of respect.

The Chairman made reference to an incident which occurred in Neath & Port Talbot County Command on 29th June 2009. Chief Fire Officer Smith reported that the investigation results were expected in the coming weeks, and Members would receive an update in due course.

3 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20th APRIL 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 20TH April 2009 were received and confirmed as a true record.

4 TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2009

Revenue monitoring for the period 1st April 2008 to 31 March 2009

The Head of Finance introduced a report which compared the actual revenue and capital net expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2009 with the 2008/09 Working Budget and Capital Programme. The actual net expenditure for the year was £1,348k below budget (3.2% of net budget). The main reasons why spending was below budget were; income from revenue grants were higher than expected and during the year there were operational staff vacancies.

Net expenditure on operational costs was £1,502k below budget (4.2% of net operational budget). The revenue grants and contributions (amounting to £1,926k) and income received in respect of the co-responder scheme were shown as income, whereas the related expenditure was charged to their relevant headings. Both grant and co-responder activities were higher than anticipated resulting in apparent over spends on premises, transport and supplies and services, as well as giving a greater income than expected. It was explained that grant income is only budgeted for when it is certain, any successful grant bids against anticipated expenditure above budgeted grant had resulted in net spending being below budget. The level of overspend on supplies and services and the additional income had been further exaggerated by the £323k revenue grant made available by the Assembly in February/March.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Torrens, Chief Fire Officer Smith explained that the Service planned for and prioritised any projects that they would undertake in the event of receiving grant funds. This ensured that resources were allocated where it was most needed.

The under spend on operational pay was due to vacant posts for both full time and retained employees. Members were informed that these vacancies would be filled during 2009/10.

The spending below budget on leasing was a result of delays in the build of assets that were due to be leased. The Head of Finance explained that lease rentals were payable annually in advance from the date the asset is ready for use. The budget therefore allowed for a number of first year rentals on asset purchases that were not completed during 2008/09. The first year rentals would now be payable in 2009/10.

The overspend on non operational costs of £285k was a result of providing for the estimated cost of back dated commuted pension payments for Firefighters offset by stores overheads recharged to operational supplies and services. Members were informed that pension payments had been accurately calculated at that time, however, changes in the Firefighter pension scheme resulted in a change in calculation of pension which had been back dated.

The approved budget included a reduction of £745k in the balances held on the Authority's behalf by the Constituent Authorities. Because of the underspend, these balances would actually increase by £603k. It was anticipated that these balances would be required to support future liabilities for back dated changes in the Fire Fighter pension scheme, for efficiency exercises and other essential revenue projects, and to support the PPE project.

Capital monitoring report for the period 1st April 2008 to 31 March 2009

Members noted that there was an under spend on capital of £886k. The Head of Finance explained that the high level of capital grants received during the year (£964k) for special capital projects and the capital grants of £348k made available by the Assembly in February/March 2009 masked a true under spend against budget of £2,300k. The true under spend against budget was due to slippage in replacing PPE and in the Llandrindod Wells project from 2008/09 to a later year.

In response to a question from Councillor Williams, Members were informed that the Service worked in partnership with the Magistrates Court and Dyfed Powys Police on the Llandrindod Wells project.

The initial budget was to be financed by loan and the slippage had resulted in required borrowing reducing from £3,305k in the year to £1,078k. In line with the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy no external loans were raised during 2008/09, with the additional capital financing requirement being funded by internal investment, that is by cash holdings. As the investment markets become more stable or the cash holdings used are required for other purposes, the internal investments

will be converted into external loans.

Prudential Indicators

The Head of Finance stated that capital financing was within the limits set by the Prudential Indicators.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Budget Monitoring Report for the year ended 31st March 2009 be received and noted

5 TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2009/2010

Revenue monitoring for the period 1st April to 31 May 2009

Committee considered a report which compared the estimated revenue net expenditure for the two months ended 31 May 2009 against the profiled working budget for the same period. The estimated net expenditure was calculated by adding the actual figure shown in the financial records to the known commitments at 31 May 2009.

On this basis, Members were informed that a current under spend of £61k (less than 0.1% of the profiled budget) was estimated at 31 May 2009. This variance was insignificant and resulted in a forecast under spend of £142k at the year end. This variance was less than 0.5% of the working budget and was mainly due to delays in filling full-time operational posts. The Head of Finance reported that making accurate estimates of future spending was difficult at this time, but as the year progressed a clearer and more accurate forecast of the year end position could be calculated.

Capital monitoring for the period 1st April to 31 May 2009

The report summarised the expenditure on capital projects to date against the Approved Capital Programme. Chief Fire Officer Smith explained to Members that the Service had originally agreed to procure new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) via the Integrated Clothing Project. However, subsequently, significant concerns had been raised to the Service with regard to the quality of kit. The Service had therefore taken the decision to return to the market place and undertake an All Wales mini-evaluation of fire kit. The PPE evaluation week had been held in July 2009 and a report recommending the preferred option would be finalised in the coming weeks. Members were informed that the £1.2m underspend would be spent this financial year.

Members supported the Service in the decision taken to delay the purchasing of fire kit to ensure that operational staff received the best fire kit available.

Councillor M Williams requested an update on the Amman Valley project to be

presented at the next Fire Authority meeting held 28th September 2009.

Prudential Indicators

The Head of Finance stated that capital financing was within the limits set by the Prudential Indicators.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. The Budget Monitoring Report for the Financial Year 2009/10 be received and noted**
- 2. Members receive an update on the Amman Valley Project at the next Fire Authority meeting held on 28th September 2009.**

6 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON THE ICT DEPARTMENT

Mr Nigel Williams, Head of Information & Communications Technology was welcomed to the meeting and presented Members with an overview of the ICT function within the Service.

Members were provided with a summary of key departmental activities as follows:

- ICT Systems Maintenance & Support
- Service Desk
- ICT Asset Management
- Information Systems Security
- Business Continuity Management
- ICT Procurement
- Project Management
- Legislative & Regulatory Compliance
- Vehicle Radio & Mobile Data Installations
- ICT Training (ECDL)

Mr Williams explained that the department provided Administrative Systems Support e.g. E Mail, Internet, Business Applications, Performance Management etc in addition to Frontline Support Systems. These systems included FireLink, Control Room Command & Control, Fire Station Mobilising System, Mobile Data, Computer Aided Design, Hydrant System, Paging & Alerter Networks and Mobile Radio System.

A discussion ensued on Staff Development and Competencies whereby Mr Williams explained that five members of his staff had been educated to graduate level. Staff received regular Personal Performance and Development Reviews in order to identify training requirements in terms of workplace training, external training, academic qualifications and vocational qualifications. A mentoring process for new members of staff had also been adopted. Reference was also made to Professional Memberships, including BCS membership.

With regard to Business Planning the section continued to engage with departments to identify the different needs of the organisation. The Performance Management System, together with Departmental Progress Reports ensured that objectives were being met. Also, the Service help desk provided an assessment of departmental activities and aided in identifying any trends.

Mr Williams gave an overview of the governance arrangements in place to support audit activities, including the Wales Programme for Improvement, ICT Good Practice and Software Licensing Compliance.

Members were informed that the total ICT budget for 2008/09 amounted to £1.27m. Following a question from Councillor Torrens, Mr Williams explained that in comparison to the ICT budget held in other Services the department had to be dynamic in ensuring best value for money, particularly given the current economic climate.

Members thanked Mr Williams for his comprehensive presentation and congratulated all ICT members of staff in continuing with the good work of the department.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Members note the update on the Information & Communications Technology department.