

**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, 20 GORFFENNAF 2009
MONDAY, 20 JULY 2009**

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

11.00AM – 12.20PM

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: C Philpott

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: J Holmes, T Tudor, E
Kirchner, B Hynes

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES P James, J Dudley, JJJ Davies, R
Lewis, P Llewellyn

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: A Howells, P Bates, R Rees, D Swan,
S Bryant, S Flather, Joanne West

1. DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTEREST

None were declared.

2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Joanne West from KPMG.

As this would be the last meeting attended by Area Manager Bob Rees prior to his impending retirement, the Chair took the opportunity to thank Area Manager Rees for his contribution to the Service and wished him a happy and healthy retirement.

3 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27TH APRIL 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th April 2009 were received and approved as a true record.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the PRAC Meeting Held on 27th April 2009

ACFO Bates drew attention to item 5, Business Performance Management Report April 2008 – March 2009. Members had previously raised concerns that Neath & Port Talbot County Command were experiencing difficulties in providing operational cover during daytime hours in retained stations. Members were informed that an analysis of contractual commitments and recent staff movements had identified establishment improvements which could be made at two stations. Recruitment campaigns were underway in these station areas with a view to recruiting full complements of retained duty staff in the near future. Members were assured that the current shortfall did not compromise operational cover and it was anticipated that the command would return to acceptable performance in the near future.

The Clerk referred to item 7 of the minutes where it was reported that the Internal Audit Programme for 2009/10 would be reported to this meeting. Members were informed that the programme had yet to be finalised and would now be presented at the next meeting.

4 TO RECEIVE THE WELSH PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT APRIL-JUNE 2009.

Members gave consideration to Quarter 1 performance information for 2009/10 which formed part of the Service's Performance Management reporting methodology.

The indicators were calculated using 3 Months' data (April – June) to project the Service Annual Performance. It was noted that due to the very low activity, the numbers involved in calculating the Performance Indicators could distort this projected result.

Members were informed that this was the second year Services in Wales had been able to report on the new indicators. Previously the Service had calculated indicator values retrospectively for 2007/08 to provide comparison data where possible.

The Corporate Health Indicators were considered and Members drew attention to the percentage of female firefighters, which was currently off target. A particularly challenging target had been set, however the Service's performance was nearly 2% better than the Welsh average. Members were pleased to note that 4 female Retained Duty System Personnel had been appointed into the Wholetime Duty System.

Station Manager Swan drew attention to the Service Delivery Indicators concerning smoke alarm ownership and functionality. The indicators showed a variance from previous reported values and Members were assured that Officers were investigating whether this was due to a change in the reporting process or an actual trend shift.

ACFO Bates noted that it was extremely unfortunate and disappointing to report 2 confirmed fire deaths in the current reporting quarter. The Service would continue to utilise the risk modelling system (FSEC) to attempt to target hard to reach people i.e. high risk individuals who live in low risk areas.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted.

5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE ACTIONS DATABASE UPDATE

ACFO Bates presented a report on the Actions Database, which was a sophisticated system that would capture all actions required from the Service. Members were informed that the Database ensured that opportunities for joint working were identified and that audit recommendations were actioned/reported onto the relevant boards. It was the intention of the Strategic Planning and Performance Department to use this database to track all actions for the Service with relevant milestones and dates for their completion.

The Actions Database would allow all programmes of work required of the Service to be held on one easily accessible database. It would also allow the progression of respective actions to effectively monitored and updated by those responsible for specific work.

Members received a progress update on the areas of Service activity currently being tracked by the database, as follows:

- Audit recommendations – all actions either on target or complete
- Consultations - all actions either on target or complete
- Wales Programme for Improvement – Operational Assurance Self Assessment part 1 submissions and Stage 1 Improvement information on target.
- Wales Fire and Rescue Circulars – all actions on target.
- Peer Assessment Team - Areas for Development – of the 38 actions, 11 are complete and 27 are on target.
- Operational Learning System Action Plans – all actions on target or complete
- Other Actions – all actions on target.

Station Manager Swan reported that during July and August members of the Strategic Planning and Performance Department will be delivering training to those members of staff who had been identified as needing to update the Actions Database.

Members were pleased to note the Service's resilient approach in dealing with actions and requested a full presentation on the system's capabilities at the next committee meeting.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Members receive the report and support the process outlined within.

6 TO RECEIVE THE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT APRIL-JUNE 2009

Station Manager Swan introduced the Business Performance Management Report April – June 2009 which reported on first quarter performance for 2009/10. It was noted that all county commands had reviewed their acceptable skill gaps at the start of the year and had consequently increased the target accordingly.

The performance management report highlighted objectives in individual business plans that were currently off target. Some Commands were showing off target for Effective and Empowered people, however Members were assured that this had improved over the reporting year and progress was being made against these skill gaps.

Members drew attention to the following issues:

NPT Command – Members were informed that it was anticipated that the current skill gap would be on target by December 2009. The Service was in the process of investigating a more consistent approach of recording skill gaps throughout the organisation.

Attention was drawn to the Information and Communication Technology department. Station Manager Swan reported that the Service's radio replacement project (Firelink) still had some outstanding matters from the initial phase of fitting new radio equipment in certain Service vehicles (phase A) and there was potential for the subsequent phase (B) due to start in August to be deferred for three months as a consequence of this.

Within Powys County Command it was noted that significant shortfalls had been identified in the Personal, Professional Development Review (PPDR) programme. Members were assured that this was a result of administration issues and would be addressed by the next reporting period. Following a question from Councillor Holmes it was noted that the Service would investigate a means of streamlining the paperwork involved in completing such forms.

Members raised concerns that a number of Commands continued to report that Personal, Professional Development Reviews (PPDRs) were off target. Given the importance of these reviews Members emphasised that any difficulties experienced in completing the reviews would need to be addressed and resolved as soon as possible.

ACFO Wyn Edwards informed Members that arrangements had been made to discuss such issues at the next Service Delivery Forum. The meeting would address areas of concerns, recognise best practice and to identify an effective reporting mechanism to measure PPDRs.

Members requested that Directors provide an overview of PPDRs and Skill Gaps that were off target for their respective directorates at the next committee meeting. This would provide officers with accountability and ensure that all issues were being managed appropriately and effectively.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. The report be received and noted.***
- 2. An overview of Personal, Professional Development Reviews and Skill Gaps be reported at Directorate Level at the next Committee.***

7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEASURE

ACFO Bates reported that the Auditor General for Wales had written to the Chief Fire Officer outlining his approach to the implementation of the Local Government Measure, which would replace the Wales Programme for Improvement.

It was noted that the Measure's intent was to reform the statutory basis for service improvement and strategic planning by local authorities and FRAs in Wales. The Measure linked well-being and community planning with service

improvement and redefined basic duties to account for improvement. It would therefore require local partners to cooperate in the delivery of community strategic outcomes and to engage with citizens.

Members were informed that, as part of his approach, the Auditor General had set up working groups to develop the implementation of the Measure, with one specifically for Fire and Rescue Authorities. The Service was represented on this group by ACFO Paul Bates.

ACFO Bates stated that the formal requirement for a joint risk assessment (JRA) would be removed and replaced with an assessment of the likelihood of Fire and Rescue Authorities improving, together with an examination of past performance. A report will be provided to Fire and Rescue Authorities in the spring of each year, and publicly in the autumn of each year. The reports will focus on the beneficial outcomes for citizens.

The role of the relationship Manager would also be discontinued and new arrangements would be developed to secure effective liaison and coordination of external review.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Members acknowledge receipt of the correspondence from the Auditor General for Wales and the requirements detailed within.

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCRUTINY EXERCISE HELD 27TH APRIL 2009

Group Manager Steve Bryant introduced a report on the Equality and Diversity scrutiny exercise held on the 27th April 2009 which formed part of the forward work plan previously agreed PRAC Members. The following topic areas were addressed:

- Legislation
- Equality Standard For Local Government
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Corporate Risk
- Workforce Diversity
- Recruitment
- Business Plan Objectives

A discussion ensued on workforce diversity and Members were pleased to note an increasing amount of females employed within the organisation. New shift patterns had been implemented within Service Control which allowed staff to work part time or reduced hours etc to ensure family friendly working arrangements.

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

1. The Service should progress the implementation of a Single Equality Scheme for all Public Services, which would encompass the seven strands of diversity.
2. The Service should examine the potential for integrating the recruitment campaigns for both wholetime and retained duty system personnel.
3. The introduction of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) should be progressed to demonstrate that the Service recognises and acts upon the effects its policies have on all members of the community.
4. To ascertain if progress has been made on specific issues, reports should be provided at future PRAC meetings. This should include historical information on applications from minority groups for recruitment campaigns.
5. The numbers of Members carrying out future scrutiny exercises should be increased with a lead Member appointed.

Members concluded that the focus areas examined had been addressed and the majority of the expected outcomes of the exercise had been achieved.

Councillor Holmes noted that the Service has diversified into speciality areas of rescue such as working at height, flooding and road traffic collisions and requested clarification on the co-responder initiative. It was explained that there were 14 units, with specialist equipment, which were able to respond to incidents with the intention of preserving life until paramedics arrive on the scene.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Committee accept the Equality and Diversity Scrutiny Exercise Report.

9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FORWARD WORK PLAN FOR SCRUTINY – NOMINATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Committee gave consideration to the scrutiny forward work schedule which outlined the dates and topic areas for scrutiny exercises to be undertaken by PRAC members.

The Clerk explained that it may prove beneficial for all Members of the Fire Authority to become involved in scrutiny task and finish groups as a means of Member Engagement. The Chair noted that it may also facilitate the Silver Member Charter for 2010. It was agreed that this would be further explored and

Members would be updated accordingly.

Councillors Hynes, Kirchner and Philpott expressed an interest in undertaking the Swansea Command scrutiny exercise, however, due to the limited attendance level at the meeting, nominations for future exercises for 2009/2010 would be sought at the next committee meeting.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. Councillors Hynes, Kirchner and Philpott be nominated on the Authority's Scrutiny Exercise Group for Fire Control & Swansea Command on 30th November 2009.***
- 2. Due to the limited attendance level at the meeting, nominations for remaining exercises for 2009/2010 would be sought at the next committee meeting.***

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REGULATIONS

Committee gave consideration to a report on the consultation on proposed amendments to the accounts and audit regulations. The proposed changes took account of a number of developments that had occurred, mainly in relation to financial and governance reporting with the areas for consideration having been divided into two sections. The first section related to sign off and approval of accounts, the Audit Opinion; the Statement of Internal Control and remuneration reporting for senior staff. The second section related to matters solely regarding Community and Town Councils and would therefore not be considered by the Fire Authority.

Members considered proposals in six areas:

1. "True and Fair" endorsement of accounts and audit opinion
2. Requirement to produce a Governance Statement rather than a Statement of Internal Control
3. The process for signing and authorising accounts for issue
4. Joint Committees: Amendment to the requirement to use the SORP as a source of accounting practice.
5. Increasing Transparency in reporting of the remuneration of senior officers in local government bodies.
6. General tidy up of redundant references

Members supported all proposals, but wished to comment specifically on section 5.

In respect of section 5, Members believed that the current disclosure of numbers of staff earning in excess of £60,000 in £10,000 bands would provide sufficient information to give a transparent view of benefits packages. To give details of earnings and income for named individuals, whilst possibly not breaching legislative requirements as to disclosure, certainly released personal sensitive information into the communities that those individuals live and work in. It was felt that if this proposal was to happen then such disclosure should be by designation as opposed to naming individuals.

Members were also of the view that such figures could be misleading as there was no recognition in the proposed disclosure of the fact that the individual actually made a contribution to the overall pension benefit. If a pension disclosure was to be made, the more meaningful figure to the taxpayer would be the employers' contribution to the pension fund.

Furthermore Committee believed that reducing the bands for employees earning more than £60,000 from £10,000 to £5,000 would not add any clarity to the disclosure in the statement of accounts, but would only serve to make the notes longer. Committee were therefore of the view that the bands should remain at £10,000.

Members concluded that the definition provided in the Consultation Paper of Head of Paid Service and 1st Tier Managers would seem an appropriate definition of senior officer.

Committee strongly supported the thrust of the consultation document in increasing transparency in reporting of the remuneration of senior officers in local government bodies, but felt that the post titles as opposed to named individuals should be utilised.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Committee accept the draft consultation response on Proposed Amendments To The Accounts And Audit Regulations, with the addition that post designations should be utilised in lieu of named individuals