

**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
Dydd Llun 18 Rhagfyr 2006**

**MINUTES
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING
THE CONFERENCE CENTRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS
CARMARTHEN
Monday 18 December 2006**

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: B J Hall
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: C J Crowley

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: J Allen-Mirehouse,
J J J Davies, Mrs T Devichand,
J Dudley, T E Evans, K Harris,
D R James, F M Jones,
D C Prothero, C Morgan, C Philpott,
M Smith, P Spender, T Theophilus,
J D A Thompson, M Williams

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/ Cllrs: P James, G Phillips
C Waller

1. DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None were declared.

2. TO RECEIVE AND CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2006 were received and approved as a true record

3. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE POTENTIAL FOR LIMITING THE INCREASE IN THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR 2007/8 TO 3.5%, ON A LIKE FOR LIKE BASIS, ABOVE THAT FOR 2006/7

Members had received as part of their papers for the Fire Authority meeting of 4th December 2006 both the original budget report for 2007/08, as part of the 13th November 2006 Resources Committee minutes, and a formal Addendum report on the budget. The Addendum report had followed the informal meeting of Officers of the Authority with the Constituent Authority Treasurers and had shown a reduced proposed budget requirement increase, on a like for like basis over 2006/07, from the original 4.2% to 3.89%. At the Fire Authority meeting of 4th December 2006, Members had asked that options be prepared for consideration in order to reduce the increase in the budget requirement to 3.5% on a like for like basis.

The budget increase proposed, following the meeting with the constituent authorities, was 3.89% and it was noted that should members wish to reduce the budget increase to 3.5%, a further £165,000 would need to be cut from the latest proposals.

Members were aware that the budget proposals had already been reduced following the meeting with the constituent authorities. Provision for pay awards for both uniformed and non uniformed staff had been reduced by 0.5%, and provision for price inflation had been similarly reduced. Additionally further delays had been made to new appointments.

The Authority had already made significant efficiency savings and targeted further savings and Members appreciated that this list would be constantly reviewed and only outlined the headline efficiencies. These would form part of the evidence to be provided in the Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI) efficiencies exercise that the Authority would be expected to undertake, although a more thorough evaluation would be undertaken when formal guidance had been received from the Assembly/Wales Audit Office.

Following further debate amongst officers, the following possibilities with regard to achieving the reduction of £165,000 were offered for considered by Members:

- 1) Capitalising the first year Broadband costs (but £30k required 8/9 on)
– £25,000

- 2) Possible Control Room and Administrative Support efficiencies -£30,000
- 3) Phasing of one LFS/CS post (full year effect required 2008/09) - £10,000
(LFS =Legislative Fire Safety, CS = Community Safety)
- 4) Re-phasing of new CS initiatives originally intended for 2006/07 -£100,000

Due to the small number of requests for additional budget pressures coming through in 2007/08 over 2006/07 as priorities, and due to the extent of reductions made already in this years budget process, any further options would necessitate a reduction of service levels included in the base budget.

The Treasurer emphasised to Members that any reductions made from the 2007/08 budget proposals would come through again as pressures in the 2008/09 budget exercise. This would reduce the potential to take on board new pressures coming from the Risk Reduction Planning process for 2008/09 and thus delay their implementation.

Members noted and shared the concerns of the Treasurer that cuts in the 2007/08 budget would have implications for future years budgets but expressed hopes that continued implementation of the Risk Reduction Plan would bring about its own savings and reductions in costs to the Authority.

A number of Members expressed concern at the level of detail available to them in the setting of the budget and queried whether they should be involved in more in depth discussions at an earlier stage. The majority of Committee, however, were satisfied in the way in which the budget was presented to them and expressed every confidence in the level of scrutiny and debate used by Officers in the budget making process. The Chief Fire Officer invited further discussion of issues of scrutiny at a future meeting of the Modernisation Working Group should Members so wish.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED

- 1 That following consideration of the report on the potential for limiting the increase in the budget requirement for 2007/8 to 3.5%, on a like for like basis, above that for 2006/7, the report be approved for formal consultation with the constituent authorities.***
- 2 That as a number of service reviews were currently underway or would be undertaken in the near future and the potential savings were not therefore clear, it was agreed that should the level of savings identified from those reviews be greater than assumed in the budget process, that officers be authorised to utilise those on any budget heads that had been reduced during the budget discussions.***

