

**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 30 Hydref 2006**

**MINUTES
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING
THE CONFERENCE CENTRE
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS
CARMARTHEN
Monday 30 October 2006**

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: B J Hall

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

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/ Cllrs: C J Crowley, Mrs J
Dudley, Mrs F M Jones,
Mrs P Spender

1. DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared.

2. PERSONAL MATTERS

Members stood for a minutes silence in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the Aberfan disaster which occurred forty years ago on October 21, 1966.

3. TO RECEIVE AND CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 3RD JULY AND 24TH JULY 2006

The minutes of the Fire Authority meetings held on 3rd and 24th July 2006 were received and confirmed as a true record.

4. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 24TH JULY 2006

The minutes of the Resources Committee held on 24th July 2006 were received and noted

5. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 4TH SEPTEMBER 2006

The minutes of the Performance and Policy Review Committee held on 4th September 2006 were received and noted

6. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD ON 25TH SEPTEMBER 2006

The minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 25th September 2006 were received and noted

7. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 2ND OCTOBER 2006

The minutes of the Standards Committee held on 2nd October 2006 were received and noted

8. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MODERNISATION GROUP HELD ON 9TH OCTOBER 2006

The minutes of the Modernisation Group held on 9th October 2006 were received and noted

9. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18th OCTOBER 2006

The minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee held on 18th October 2006 were received and noted

10. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF WALES STATISTICAL BULLETIN FOR THE 12 MONTH PERIOD 1ST OCTOBER 2004 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2005

Members gave consideration to the report on the analysis of Welsh Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) fire statistics which had been published by the National Assembly of Wales (NAW). The monitor summarised the provisional information provided on fires and false alarms and compared performance with the previous reporting period.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the monitor showed very positive results for Mid & West Wales FRS and demonstrated improvement in areas where intervention activities were currently being focussed. The areas showing greatest improvement were:-

- Accidental fires in the home are reduced by 19%
- Injuries arising from accidental fires in the home are reduced by 19%
- Deliberate primary fires are reduced by 15%
- Malicious false alarms are reduced by 14%

This served to demonstrate that the initiatives and strategies adopted as the result of previous Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP) and being developed within the Authority's current Risk Reduction Plan (RRP), were having positive results on performance.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report on the National Assembly of Wales Statistical Bulletin for the 12 month period 1st October 2004 to 30th September 2005 be received and noted

11. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FINALISATION OF THE RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2007/10

Committee were aware that the Member Working Group which had been set up to specifically develop the Authority's Risk Reduction Plan had met on 18th October 2006 in order to consider the outcomes from the extensive consultation which had been undertaken and which had ended on 26th September 2006.

A report had been considered at that meeting which summarised the consultation exercise and the Director of Service Policy & Planning and the Head of Operational Risk Management (ORM) had discussed with Members the

key outcomes from the responses received. The Member Working Group had accepted the report and had directed areas where they required that the draft plan was to be amended prior to it being considered by the full Fire Authority. It was brought to Members' attention that the development of the plan had been compliant with all aspects of regulatory guidance and was on time and within budget. It was further noted that in order to comply with WAG guidelines the finalised plan had to be published on 31st October 2006.

The Head of ORM gave a detailed presentation to Members on the consultation summary report and the areas of change in the final plan which had been agreed by the Member Working Group on 18th October 2006. Of the 121 responses received, it was reported that a small number of comments had been received after the closing date, one of which was a response from Haverfordwest Town Council and also a resolution signed by a collective group of Pembrokeshire Councils. As one of the major proposals contained within the plan related to proposed staffing changes at Haverfordwest, Members of the Working Group had decided to take this response into consideration.

Of all the responses received the three main areas of concern had been the proposals for intervention services at Haverfordwest Fire Station, Pontardawe Fire Station and the Retained and day crewed review/salary scheme

In respect of Haverfordwest Fire Station the main areas for concern centred around the perceived cuts in manpower, possible increases in response times, the LNG and Petrochemical risks and the redeployment of staff. Although it was indicated that there would be a small increase in the turn out time should the Station be covered by Retained Personnel at night, it was confirmed that this would be insignificant. It was noted that the same number of staff would be on duty at any one time as they were at present and that the Service engaged with LNG on a daily basis. It was further stated that there would be no compulsory redundancies; rather the posts would be redirected to enable the core aims of the RRP to be achieved.

Members were informed that a number of valuable comments had been made in relation to Pontardawe Fire Station with the Authority's proposal to carry out a further review and options analysis of the best method to meet community risk in the Pontardawe, Upper Swansea and Amman Valley areas.

The carrying out of this review had been supported in the consultation and would be conducted in 2007/08, with any further proposals to be consulted upon during the following year. It was noted that all the comments received as part of the consultation on the draft RRP 2007/10 will be fully taken into account during the review. In the meantime, the Fire Station at Pontardawe would remain crewed as it was at present.

From the responses received and ongoing discussions within the Service it was clear that there were a wide variety of views on the introduction of a salary scheme for personnel working on the retained duty system.

Members were informed that many Retained Staff were supportive of the review and had put forward many positive and supportive proposals for consideration. Whilst a wide variety of views had been expressed during the consultation, all of

which would be taken account in the design of any scheme, the Authority did not believe that there had been any firm views expressed which would warrant the proposal to be reconsidered.

Councillor DR James complimented the Officers who had developed the Risk Reduction Plan for their hard work but expressed his disappointment at the lack of formal responses received from both the Assembly Members and local Members of Parliament despite comments they had made to the press. Councillor J Allen-Mirehouse indicated that the decision making process had not been an easy one particularly in the face of huge public opposition to the change in crewing arrangements at Haverfordwest Fire Station. Having attended a number of meetings in the area, however, he had found no reasoned responses not to change the crewing arrangements and reminded the meeting that Pembroke Dock and Milford Haven Fire Stations were themselves day crewed but had not suffered any detrimental effect as a result.

Councillor M Williams welcomed the fact that more money was going towards fire prevention and gave the Risk Reduction Plan his wholehearted support. He also welcomed the review of the retained duty system as a means of providing a more secure and beneficial salary system for retained personnel. Councillor D Prothero praised the progress already made by the Service in adapting to the challenges of the modern world and believed that the proposals contained within the Risk Reduction Plan would further enhance this progress with the resulting reduction in deaths and injuries from fire already speaking for themselves.

Councillor P Llewellyn reported that the consultation process of the Fire Authority's Risk Reduction Plan had been the most difficult period of her membership of the Fire Authority as she had dealt with criticism and personal attacks from the press and public. She indicated, however, that she was prepared to support all of the recommendations contained within the Fire Authority's Risk Reduction Plan, and that she did so with the strongest conviction that none of the proposals, and in particular those relating to the change in crewing arrangements at Haverfordwest Fire Station, would place the people of Pembrokeshire at a greater risk of death or injury from fire. She continued that she had listened to and fully understood the concerns expressed by the staff at Haverfordwest Fire Station, and indeed of those living within the immediate area, and viewed the proposals as a way to provide the means to forward the Service's 'making the Communities safer' ethos. She also welcomed the fact that there would be no redundancies of personnel as a result of the change in the crewing pattern at Haverfordwest Fire Station.

Councillor J Thompson paid tribute to all those who had been involved in the development of the Risk Reduction Plan and commended the consultation process in allowing all Members to fully consult with their own communities. As a member of the RRP Working Group Councillor P James condemned the way in which misconceptions and inaccuracies had been written about in the press and which had given grounds to unfounded fears by the public.

The Chief Fire Officer concluded that the RRP process was a challenging process for the Authority and that work would commence immediately should the Plan be approved. Mr Mackay indicated that he was proud to report that there had not been a single death from fire within the Mid and West Wales area for over a year and paid tribute to all service personnel for their achievements in making this possible.

The Chair called for members to vote on the Authority's Risk Reduction Plan and ***it was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:***

- ***The report on the consultation outcomes be noted and approved***
- ***The changes to the draft plan be noted and approved***
- ***The detailed implementation plan which would be developed with action points delegated to respective Directors, Departmental Heads and County Commanders as appropriate be noted***
- ***That no compulsory redundancies be made as a result of the RRP***
- ***That the RRP 2007 – 2010 be approved for implementation***

12. TO APPROVE THE 2005/2006 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Committee were reminded that the draft Statement of Accounts (Financial Statements) for 2005/06 had been approved at the Authority meeting of 24th July 2006. Following the audit of these accounts the Wales Audit Office had requested that certain amendments be made. These amendments had now been carried out and the Authority were requested to approve the resulting final Financial Statements for 2005/06 which would then be signed by both the Chair and the Treasurer to the Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

the Financial Statements for 2005/06 be approved and signed by the Chair and Treasurer

13. TO APPROVE THE LETTER OF REPRESENTATION REGARDING THE 2005/06 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Treasurer reported that the Wales Audit Office required a letter of representations regarding the 2005/2006 Financial Statements before they could complete their audit of the Financial Statements. The letter had to be considered by the Authority and then signed by both the Treasurer and the Chair of the meeting considering the letter.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

the letter be approved and signed by the Chair and Treasurer

14. TO RECEIVE THE ISA 260 REPORT FOR 2005/06 AND A PRESENTATION THEREON BY THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE

Mr Ceri Stradling, Wales Audit Office, was welcomed to the Meeting to present the ISA 260 report for 2005/06 to Members.

Mr Stradling indicated that there were no matters of concern within his report and that he was very satisfied with the quality of the reports received from the Authority. He continued that there were no weaknesses in the internal control and commended the Finance personnel for making the work of the Auditors as easy as possible. It was noted that the Annual Audit letter would be presented to Members at the next meeting.

Councillor T E Evans, Chair of Resources Committee, thanked Mr Stradling for his excellent report and asked the Director of Finance to pass on the thanks of Members to all the finance staff for their hard work.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The ISA 260 report be received and noted

15. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE 2006/07 PERFORMANCE PLAN AS AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT FOR THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE INSPECTION PROCESS

Members were informed that the National Assembly for Wales had commissioned the Wales Audit Office (WAO) to implement a revised audit review process for the Fires & Rescue Services in Wales. (WPI-FRA). This would form part of the Wales Programme for Improvement process.

It had been initially anticipated that the review would have been published in the early part of 2006, in order to inform the performance monitoring process for 2006/2007. Draft guidance on WPI-FRA had provided a clear steer on the audit review process and this had enabled the Service to work towards full implementation, particularly with regard to Operational Assurance and risk assessments.

The guidance for WPI-FRA was not ready however so WAG and WAO had therefore advised that a similar interim process to the previous year would be undertaken.

Consideration was given to a paper which provided information on the work that was being undertaken in preparation for the adoption on the WPI-FRA reporting process in close liaison with the Wales Audit Office. It was noted that this item would normally be taken to Performance and Policy Review Committee initially but because the Performance/Improvement Plan needed to be published by 31st October 2006 alongside the RRP and did not fit into the current meeting schedule, the Authority had been asked to consider the item instead.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

That the publication of the Performance Plan be approved

16. TO RECEIVE A DVD PRESENTATION ON THE NETWORKING WOMEN IN THE FIRE SERVICE CONFERENCE 7-9 JULY 2006

Members received a short DVD presentation on the Networking Women in the Fire Service Conference, which had been attended by four Authority Members in July.

Councillor C Philpott commended the Conference as being hugely beneficial, giving staff confidence and enabling them to experience areas within the Service that they would not be able to in course of their daily work. Councillor Philpott continued that she would be assisting at next years Conference as a volunteer and would encourage other members of staff to attend as trainers.

17. TO RECEIVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOTH THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 2ND OCTOBER 2006 AND THE MODERNISATION WORKING GROUP HELD ON 9TH OCTOBER 2006 ON PROVIDING INDEMNITIES TO MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

The Clerk reported that the ability of members and officers to take decisions and deliver services on behalf of the authority without the risk of personal liabilities where they have acted properly was fundamental to the effective operation of the Authority. Following the publication of Assembly Regulations and specific guidance, Members' attention was drawn to a report which explained what indemnities could be given, what restrictions could apply, and continued at Appendix 1 to suggest a form of indemnity which could be adopted by the Authority.

It was noted that both the Standards Committee and Modernisation Group had given detailed consideration to the report and had recommended that the Authority approve the indemnity as detailed in Appendix 1.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

That the report be noted and approval be given to the indemnity contained in Appendix 1

18. TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE FOR 2005/06

The Clerk reported that the Standards Committee had, as a matter of good corporate governance, resolved to provide the Fire and Rescue Authority with an annual report on its activities during each financial year. For this purpose the

Committee had met on 2nd October 2006 to agree its annual report for 2005/06 for Members' consideration. It was noted that Gerwyn Morgan JP, the Independent Chair of the Standards Committee, had wished to attend the Meeting to present the report personally, but had been prevented from doing so due to other commitments.

Councillor G Seabourne spoke of the proactive and far-reaching nature of the work of the Committee and commended the report for approval.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The Annual Report of the Standards Committee be noted and approved.

19. TO RECEIVE THE CHAIR'S REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AT THE INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS 2006 FIRE SAFETY CONFERENCE ON 12TH OCTOBER 2006 IN CO. MEATH

The Chair of the Authority had attended the Institution of Fire Engineers 2006 Fire Safety Conference on the 12 October 2006 in Co Meath.

It was noted that the Conference covered a wide range of professional and technical subject areas, which were of great interest to the large number of Fire Officers and Fire Service staff in attendance, but were of limited interest and benefit to the small number of Members that attended the event.

It was suggested that in future years the event should only be considered for Member attendance in exceptional circumstances, and that the financial investment previously made should be put towards Authority Members' attendance at events which had more of a Member focus such as the Annual Fire Conference and the WLGA Annual Conference.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

the Group leaders meet with the Chief Fire Officer in the New Year to discuss future attendance by Members at Standing Conferences

20. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE 2007 UNITED STATES/UNITED KINGDOM FIRE SYMPOSIUM

Committee were informed that the US/UK Fire Symposium was an annual event that takes place alternately in the United States and in the United Kingdom. The event brings together Chief Fire Officers and Senior Managers from both countries to discuss and debate matters of common interest and to exchange experiences. In recent years this had involved sharing the lessons of events such as the Twin Towers incident and the London bombings of 2005, as well as horizon scanning the challenges of the future.

It was intended that the 2007 event would take place in Mid and West Wales, and this marked the first occasion on which the Symposium had taken place in Wales. The event was deliberately designed on a relatively small scale to allow a full exchange of views amongst the participants.

Provisional arrangements were in hand for the event to take place in Swansea from Sunday, 1 April to Tuesday, 3 April 2007. As the host Service, there would be the opportunity for both contributing to the programme and agenda, and for members of the Service to gain significant exposure to the skills and experience of a wide range of visiting senior Officers.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- *That the Authority offers a warm welcome to the 2007 US/UK Symposium to the Mid and West Wales Fire & Rescue area, and that the Authority hosts a welcome reception for the delegates.*
- *That the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to provide local logistical and administrative support to the event as necessary.*
- *That the outcomes of the Symposium be reported to the Authority subsequent to the event.*

21. TO RECEIVE ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Members gave consideration to the recent service delivery reports from the six County Commands and expressed concerns at the large and increasing number of road traffic collision fatalities which had occurred, particularly on the rural roads.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

A letter be sent to the Welsh Assembly Government, with copies to Unitary Authorities, expressing the concerns of Members of the number of RTC's in the Mid & West Wales area.