

**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
25 MEHEFIN 2007

**MINUTES
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Conference Centre,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
25 JUNE 2007

11.00am – 12.35pm

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:	C J Crowley
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:	T E Evans
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: J S Allen-Mirehouse, Mrs K Becton, J J J Davies, Mrs T Devichand, Mrs J Dudley, K Harris, D R James, P James, Mrs F M Jones, R Lewis, Mrs P Llewellyn, C Morgan, G Phillips, Mrs C Philpott, D Prothero, G Seabourne, T Theolphilus, J D A Thompson, C Waller, M Williams
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	Cyng/Cllrs: Mrs Spender
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	R Smith, E Aitken, A Howells, K Jones, G Ashe, P Bates, W Edwards, E Mills, S Flather

1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared

2 PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair welcomed Councillor Pearl Llewellyn to her first meeting since her return as a Member of the Fire Authority.

The Chair informed the Committee of a recent tragic incident where a Firefighter from Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service had died after being hit by a car as he tackled a vehicle fire on a motorway.

Members stood as a sign of respect for the deceased firefighter.

4 PRESENTATION FROM THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF LIFE FROM FIRE

A presentation was made on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire to Mr Clive Thomas, who had rescued an elderly resident from her flat in sheltered accommodation following a chip pan fire. The citation was read by County Commander Gethin Davies, and Members warmly congratulated Mr Thomas on his courageous act.

3 TO CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Minutes of the Fire Authority meetings held on 21st May and 6th June 2007 were confirmed and approved as a true record.

4 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD ON 18TH JUNE 2007 AND TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF SERVICE CONTROL

The minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 18th June 2007 were received and considered.

Members were advised that a report on the Review of Service Control had been considered by the Personnel Committee which had been endorsed for approval by the full Fire Authority. Members had also considered supporting papers including a response document from Control Staff Members together with an independent report from external consultants who had reviewed crewing arrangements at the facility. Prior to the Personnel Committee meeting a late request to convene a Joint Consultative Committee meeting had been made, the notes of which were attached for Members' information.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the recommendations contained within the report were designed to provide resilient and flexible crewing arrangements for the Control Centre, and to improve the out dated crewing arrangements which resulted in the same number of operators being available during both busy and much quieter periods. Such an arrangement was not considered effective in meeting current business requirements.

The proposed new staffing arrangements would allow for five people to be available for the majority of the 24 hour period, and for four people during quieter periods. Four core shifts or "watches" would be supported by two flexible support teams, allowing cover to be provided for leave, training, sickness and other unexpected absences. It would also allow the Control Room to operate effectively without the need for excessive overtime, an area which both management and staff had expressed concern over during recent months. The new arrangements would place twenty staff on the four core watches supported by nine other posts in managerial roles and on support crews. Some of the support crew posts would consist of part-time appointments offering both flexibility of employment and rostering of staff.

In line with Fire Authority policy no employees at Service Control would face the prospect of redundancy, rather new staff would be recruited to fill the posts required for the new flexible support watches.

In the lengthy discussion which ensued, Members recognised that Control staff had expressed a contrary view to the proposals contained within the Review Document.

In response to a number of questions from Members, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer indicated that it was hoped that the proposed changes in staffing arrangements would ease sickness levels by reducing the high levels of overtime currently being worked. He continued that the new part time contracts offered more flexibility and recent recruitment advertising for such posts had resulted in a very good response. Mr Smith reported that although it would not be practical to introduce the changes on a trial basis, the new staffing methods would be continually monitored. Members requested that reports on progress be made to each Personnel Committee meeting and that the Joint Consultative Committee continue to meet as and when staff had issues to discuss.

In conclusion, Members welcomed the attendance of Control Staff at the meeting in which a full and frank discussion of views had been debated and expressed hopes that all areas of concern could be overcome and a satisfactory conclusion reached.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- i) The staffing structure contained within the report be approved**
- ii) Consultation on the staffing structure to take place with the relevant Minister at the Welsh Assembly Government**
- iii) An on going review of the new staffing arrangements to take place over the next 12 months with a progress report to be presented at each meeting of the Personnel Committee**

5 TO RECEIVE THE STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL FOR 2006/07

It was reported that in order to meet the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2005, as amended, the Authority each year was obliged to conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of internal control, and publish a Statement on Internal Control (SIC). This had to be specifically considered by the Fire Authority, even though it formed part of the Statement of Accounts. It was a requirement that the most senior officer, the Chief Fire Officer, and the most senior Member, the Chair of the Authority, should sign the Statement.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The Statement on Internal Control be approved

6 TO RECEIVE THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2006/2007

The Director of Finance and Procurement presented the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2006-07, subject to audit. It was noted that formal approval by Members was required by 30th June 2007 and that the presiding Member at the approval meeting was required to sign and date the Statement of Accounts.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The Statement of Accounts for the Financial Year 2006 – 2007 be approved and that they be duly signed and dated by the Chair of the Authority.

7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WELSH PURCHASING CARD PILOT SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report which identified the business benefits and costs associated with implementing the Welsh Purchasing Card (WPC) for low risk purchasing within Mid and West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- i) The implementation of a Welsh Purchasing Card Pilot Scheme within the Procurement, Purchasing & Supplies, Finance and Communications/IS departments, as part of the ongoing procurement improvement plan be approved*
- ii) For the purpose of (i) above, the setting up of a contract with Nat West/Royal Bank of Scotland, specifically for the use of*

purchasing cards be approved

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE BUDGET UPDATE

Members received a report on the issues that would affect the budget setting process for 2008-2011, the next 3 year budgeting period for the Authority. A further update would be given at the next Members' training seminar in Autumn 2007.

Members were aware that following the last Members training session in March the Chancellors pre - budget report had indicated a further tightening of resources over the 3 year period 2008-11. This was likely to become apparent in the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) announcement, which was originally scheduled for July, but had been reported as being delayed, possibly even until the Autumn.

The Chancellor had outlined an expected 2% increase in pay awards across the public sector and indicated a potential requirement to provide efficiencies of 3% every year. This had yet to be formally announced in the CSR, and the expectation of the Assembly in reaction to the Chancellor's statement, had yet to be declared. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) had made clear that it considered the delivery of this level of efficiency gains to be totally unrealistic. A 3 % efficiency level for this Authority was in the region of £1.2 million.

Since March, the Authority had played a full part in the Expenditure Sub Group budget negotiating process with the Assembly and WLGA. A report had been submitted on behalf of all Fire and Rescue Services in Wales outlining the pressures facing Authorities over the next 3 years.

Senior Officers had recently met with the Constituent Authority Treasurers in order to give them an understanding of the ongoing and additional pressures to be faced in the coming year and of their impact on the 2008/09 and successive budgets. This dialogue would be maintained throughout the budget construction and setting process.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The budget update report be received for information