

**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  
**29 HYDREF 2007**

**MINUTES  
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Conference Centre,  
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen  
**29 OCTOBER 2007**

**11.00am – 12.45pm**

**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, K Harris, D R James,  
R Lewis, Mrs P Llewellyn, C Morgan,  
G Phillips, Mrs C Philpott, D Prothero,  
G Seabourne, T Theophilus,  
J D A Thompson, M Williams,  
Mrs Spender, C Waller, Mrs J Dudley

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: P James, Mrs F M Jones,

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: D Mackay, R Smith, E Aitken, A Howells,  
P Bates, K Jones, P Crayford, G Davies,  
W Edwards, K Jones, G Ashe, H Webber,  
J Maunder

## **1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS**

The Vice Chair declared an interest in item 6 as he had taken part in a radio interview earlier that day relating to this item and Councillor T E Evans retired from the meeting during the ensuing discussions.

## **2 TO CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2007**

The Minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 24<sup>TH</sup> September 2007 were confirmed and approved as a true record.

## **3 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2007-2010**

Members were aware that the independent review of the Authority's decisions relating to the crewing arrangements at Haverfordwest had been conducted during the summer. The review had been carried out by the former Chief Inspector of Fire Services for England, Sir Graham Meldrum and had been commissioned in agreement with the Authority by the former Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, Mrs E Hart.

Sir Graham had now reported to the Assembly and a report summarising his findings was attached for Members' attention. A copy of the full report was also available at the meeting for the information of Members.

Members were gratified to note that in reference to the change in crewing arrangements at Haverfordwest, the Review Team had considered that the Mid and West Wales Fire Authority had carried out a proper and full assessment of risk in that area and that 'their published conclusions were soundly based on the outcomes of FSEC computer modelling combined with experience of stations with similar risk profiles and activity levels.'

Although Sir Graham's report was largely supportive of the Authority's approach, particularly in relation to its risk analysis and stakeholder consultation processes, there were issues raised within the report relating to consultation and communication with directly affected staff, the development of plans to provide preventative services to high risk properties and the need to develop plans for the industrial developments within the Milford Haven area.

Members were informed that these comments had been fully considered by Officers and steps were in place to ensure that Sir Grahams recommendations were effectively addressed and acted upon as appropriate.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

- 1. Members note the outcome of the independent review**
- 2. Members endorse the work underway to address the**

***recommendations for improvement contained within Sir Graham's report***

**4 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FINALISATION OF THE RISK REDUCTION ACTION PLAN 2008/09**

Committee were aware that the Risk Reduction Plan Member Working Group had now finished its deliberations on the shape of the 08/09 Risk Reduction Action Plan which built upon the strategic intentions of the main Risk Reduction Plan 07/10 which had been approved by the Authority in October 2006.

The Working Group had considered all of the comments received as a result of the consultation and had recommended that the Authority progressed in its proposals contained within the plan, including risk reduction activities in the upper Swansea/Amman valley and duty systems.

Following consideration of the report which summarised the consultation exercise and highlighted the key outcomes from the responses received, the Working Group indicated areas where they wished the plan to be amended prior to it being considered by the full Fire Authority.

Members noted that for the first time, the RRP action plan was incorporated with the Improvement Plan which was required as part of the Wales Programme for Improvement. The Improvement Plan element of the document had been considered by the Authority's Performance Review and Audit Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007.

In developing the 08/09 action plan, the Chief Fire Officer and Head of ORM had met with County Commanders and staff directly affected by the major proposals in addition to extensive input from the respective Directors and key departmental managers.

Following lengthy consideration, the Working Group had considered all of the comments received as a result of the consultation and had made the recommendation that the Authority made progress with its proposals for risk reduction activities in the upper Swansea/Amman valley and duty systems.

In response to a question from Members the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that whilst general enquires had been made regarding potential sites for the new station in the upper Swansea/Amman Valley area, together with broad costings for a new shared facility, plans had not been taken further until such time as the proposal had been formally approved or otherwise by Members.

Concerns were expressed that the figures relating to the response times were confusing and were at odds with those printed in the press. The Chief Fire Officer responded that the data that had been presented to Members was accurate and that there were certain inaccuracies in such data that had been printed in the media.

The concerns of the people living within the Pontardawe area were raised particularly in view of the growing residential and commercial development

within the area and their fears that a retained system at night would lead to a less efficient service.

The majority of Members, however, were of the view that the Service provided a first class retained system and were very satisfied with the provision and response times that the retained stations provided. It was noted that new developments in all areas were subject to continuous review in order to ensure that response times were being met.

Members of the RRP Working Group were commended as having spent many hours reviewing the proposals in order to provide the best possible decision for the Service and the population in which it served. The Chairman added that all Members wished to provide a safe environment for the people they represented and that he was delighted that the proposal had been put forward to build a new fire station within his area.

Members were reminded that at the JCC meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2006, the Fire Brigades Union had asked the Authority to consider its position in relation to compulsory redundancy as a result of any proposals contained within the RRP. The Authority had previously given a commitment to no enforced redundancy in previous risk management plans but given the proposals contained within the RRP this year, Members were asked to consider if they wished to reaffirm this previous commitment.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

- 1. Members approve the Risk Reduction Action Plan 08/09.**
- 2. Members note and approve the report on the consultation outcomes**
- 3. Members approve publication of both documents on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 07.**
- 4. Members note that a detailed implementation plan would be developed with action points delegated to respective Directors, Departmental Heads and County Commanders as appropriate.**
- 5. The Authority re-affirms its position of no compulsory redundancy**

## **5 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REPORT OF THE FIRE CONTROL REVIEW**

Reference was made to recommendations made at the Fire Authority Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2007 when the new staffing structure at Service Control had been approved, with an on going review of the new arrangements to take place over the next 12 months and a progress report to be presented to each meeting of the Personnel Committee.

Following this decision the Fire Brigades Union had requested third party assistance as outlined within The Scheme of Conditions of Service with the issue being referred to the Control Staffing Structure of the National Joint Council Joint Secretaries Group. This meeting took place on 3 September 2007 and despite significant concessions being made by management at this

meeting, including a suggestion for possible solution which would have provided 31 FTE posts, agreement had not been reached.

Following this meeting, Members of the Fire Authority and the Chief Fire Officer had met the Welsh Assembly Government Minister, Dr Brian Gibbons AM where the Service's Control Room staffing structure was discussed. The Assembly's Fire and Rescue National Framework document for Wales required the Fire Authority to seek to agree with the Assembly Government on the arrangements for managing and maintaining the Control Room, and comply with National protocols on staff roles and training and back up resilience requirements.

The Chief Fire Officer had written to all members of Control outlining progress to date and future actions, which would be reinforced with further consultation with all members of Control on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of November.

A recruitment campaign for the role of Firefighter [Control] had been held in July with 105 applications being returned and the four successful applicants had begun their training on 3rd of September to be available for full operational duties by mid December. A further three employees would commence their training from 12<sup>th</sup> November and would be available for full operational duties by mid February 2008. These seven employees would be conditioned to a flexible part-time contract of employment and would operate on the two support watches.

The first phase of variable crewing would be introduced during December and would be enhanced during February when all new entrants would have completed their training whereupon full variable crewing would be delivered through the 24 hour period. These moves would be undertaken along with any voluntary moves from existing staff and associated promotions to fill existing and planned vacancies and all vacancies and promotion would be advertised to all eligible staff. It was emphasised that no staff would be moved against their will from the current agreed rota system of 2 days, 2 nights followed by four rota days.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***The report be received and noted for information***

### **6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AND RESILIENCE DEPARTMENT – PROPOSED STRUCTURE**

Members were aware that the Civil Contingencies Act placed many legal requirements on the Authority to plan for emergencies. Whilst steps had been taken towards addressing these requirements, progress had been hampered by a lack of resources. This lack of progress was identified during the self assessment element of Operational Assessment of Service Delivery and was deemed to be a high risk within the Service's Joint Risk Assessment (JRA) with

the Wales Audit Office.

The Head of Civil Contingencies and Resilience (CCR), had identified the additional staff required to address the shortfalls, and officers had been able to establish areas where resources could be released to provide £60k of the funding required to support the proposed new posts.

A paper which summarised the current work of the CCR department, the proposed role and the resources required to meet the demands of the Civil Contingencies Act facing the Authority was provided for Members.

Members were asked to consider the following proposals for the revised structure for the Civil Contingencies and Resilience Department:

Station Manager B (FDS) –Operational Resilience Officer.  
Non-uniformed Scale 8 / 9 - Risk Assessment & Planning Officer.  
Scale 5 Resilience Support – substantiate current temporary post.

An annual increase on the Authority's budget of approximately £40k would be required to fund the Risk Assessment & Planning Officer's post. Funding for the Station Manager and Resilience Support posts had been found from internal reorganisation.

A further £10k would be required to fund mobilising of the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team to in-Service incidents.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*Before a decision could be made, an approach be made from the three Welsh Fire Authorities to the Welsh Assembly Government for assistance in funding posts required under the Civil Contingencies Act.*

### **7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FIRE AT GWYN HALL NEATH PORT TALBOT**

A report was received for information which outlined the fire fighting operations at the recent fire at the Gwyn Hall, Orchard Street, Neath on October 18th 2007.

Local members paid tribute to the efforts of the firefighters in dealing with the incident but expressed concerns about the low water pressure which had hampered the process.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be noted and that representations be made to the Water Board concerning the low water pressure.*

