

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN
CYMRU**



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

**NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE FIRE AUTHORITY AT ITS
NEXT MEETING ON 8th FEBRUARY 2010**

**COFNODION
CYFARFOD YR AWDURDOD**

Ganolfan Gynadledda,
Pencadlys Y Gwasanaeth Tân Ac Achub, Caerfyrddin
14 RHAGFYR 2009

**MINUTES
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Conference Centre,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
14 DECEMBER 2009

11.00 – 12.00

84% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:

TE Evans
C Philpott

AELODAU/MEMBERS:

Cyng/Cllrs: A Davies, D Davies, J J J
Davies, J Dinham, J Dudley, J Holmes, B
Hynes, R Llewellyn, S Lloyd-Janes, J
Newbury, G Thomas, M Williams, A
Woolcock, P James, WEA Jones, P
Llewellyn, D Thomas, D Howells, D
Fellows

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:

Cyng/Cllrs: R Lewis, E Kirchner,
F Torrens, T Tudor

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:

R Smith, P Coleman, A Howells, P Bates,
E Aitken, D Masson, J Cameron, L
Williams

1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared.

2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/PERSONAL MATTERS

Area Manager Jim Cameron, Corporate Head of Operational Risk Management and Area Manager Derek Masson, Corporate Head of Strategic Planning were welcomed to their first Fire Authority meeting following their recent appointments within the Service.

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to a new Member of the Fire Authority, Councillor David Howells of the City and County of Swansea, who had been appointed to replace Councillor Alan Jopling on the Fire Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Howells be appointed onto the People and Organisational Development Committee in place of Councillor Jopling.

3 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETINGS HELD ON 26th OCTOBER 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2009 were confirmed and approved as a true record.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Fire Authority Meeting held on 26th October 2009

Area Manager Paul Bates drew attention to Item 7, Paragraph 3 relating to the procurement of the All Wales Personal Protective Equipment. Members were informed that the Lion Apparel Pro Max suit would now be part manufactured in Lithuania to allow the project timescales to be brought forward.

4 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:

- I. Standards Committee held 19th October 2009
- II. People and Organisational Development Committee held 2nd November 2009
- III. Performance Review and Audit Committee held on 30th November 2009

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the People and Organisational Development Committee held 2nd November 2009

Reference was made to item 5 of the minutes concerning the employment of members of police forces by Fire and Rescue Authorities. Members were informed that the Chief Fire Officer had written to the relevant Chief Constables in order to obtain approval and a response was currently pending.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Performance Review and Audit Committee held on 30th November 2009

The Clerk drew to Members' notice that the cover sheet be amended to reflect an attendance level of 50%.

Councillor P James was pleased to note that Commands were indicating an improvement in the level of Personal and Professional Development Reviews undertaken.

5 TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2008/09

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Lisa Williams from the Wales Audit Office who presented the Annual Audit letter for 2008/09 to Members.

The Annual Audit letter set out the key messages from work undertaken over the last twelve months and included a summary of audit and inspection work and reported progress against improvement actions. The main conclusions were as follows:

Appointed Auditor's Report

The Authority had complied with financial and performance improvement reporting requirements

- The Authority had appropriate arrangements to administer and report financial matters and to secure value for money in its use of resources in 2008-09
- The Authority's Improvement Plan 2009-10 met statutory requirements and provided a balanced view of its performance in 2008-09

Relationship Manager's Report

The Authority had made progress in dealing with a range of risks and now needs to address agreed priority areas as identified in this year's Joint Risk Assessment

- The Authority had made progress in reducing the levels of operational risk identified by the Peer Assessment Team and would be working to further improve the operational response of the Service
- The Authority had made progress in reducing the level of risk identified in the last Joint Risk Assessment

Councillor P James was pleased to note that the report concluded that the Authority's resources were properly used and accounted for in 2008/09, with proper arrangements in place to help it achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Councillor M Williams noted that this could be attributed to the efficiency of Officers and Members in dealing with issues at committees.

Members were pleased to note the positive outcome of the report and extended their gratitude to Mrs Lisa Williams.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that:

The Annual Audit Letter 2008/09 be approved.

6 TO RECEIVE THE OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE OF SERVICE DELIVERY – PEER ASSESSMENT REPORT 2009/10

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the final report arising from this year's Operational Assurance of Service Delivery peer assessment process had been received. The report focussed on 2 of the 7 Key Lines of Enquiry – Health & Safety and Training & Development. It was noted that whilst the report concluded that the Authority's arrangements for meeting its responsibilities in these two areas could be categorised as being "Established", it encouraged the Authority to continue to progress the matters recorded as "Areas for Development". A comprehensive report was attached for Members' consideration and the main Areas for Development were highlighted as follows:-

Health and Safety

- Staff to receive the appropriate level of accident investigation training
- Corporate Risk Department to consider more active engagement with other safety critical areas of service delivery
- Improve welfare facilities at Earlswood as a matter of urgency
- Lessons from the Operational Learning System to be used to better effect

Training & Development

- Investigate whether existing training capacity was adequate to meet its safety critical training needs
- Ensure that adequate physical assets were available to support the risk critical training requirements
- Need for a more co-ordinated approach to Training Needs Analysis
- Service should ensure there was a robust system for confirming maintenance of competence in incident command, particularly where firefighters ride in charge of appliances
- Review of current system for data capture
- Data capture, particularly at RDS stations, would benefit from an enhancement to the current IT infrastructure and on-station facilities. Councillor M Williams emphasised the importance of the retained duty system staff in providing frontline services within rural areas and was pleased to note that station facilities would be reviewed to ensure that they were fit for purpose.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Members note the findings and areas for development detailed in the Peer Assessment Team report; and that the areas for development will be progressed, the rate of which

will be subject to resource availability.

- 7 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 16TH NOVEMBER 2009 AND 30TH NOVEMBER 2009, AND:**
- (A) RECEIVE CORRESPONDENCE TO THE CHAIR OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY FROM THE REGIONAL COORDINATOR SOUTH WEST WALES WLGA AND AN INTERIM RESPONSE.**
- (B) APPROVE THE JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES ON THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR 2010/11**

Consideration was given the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 16th November 2009 and 30th November 2009, which were confirmed and approved as a true record by a show of hands.

- 8A** Reference was made to the correspondence received from the WLGA. The Chairman confirmed that an interim response had been forwarded to the WLGA stating that the Authority was fully cognisant of the unprecedented pressure on public service expenditure and the impact that would have on service delivery; however a further letter of reply would be made in the near future in order to provide a comprehensive answer to the comments contained within the letter.

Councillor D Fellows highlighted that given the severe financial constraints within Local Authorities and the drastic measures that will need to be undertaken to deal with pressures and burdens already facing County councils, the Authority should exercise caution when issuing a response to the WLGA.

Members were reminded that the process for budget setting was for the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer to meet with the six constituent authority treasurers early in the budget setting process to gain a broad understanding as to the prevailing circumstances affecting Local Government in general. This would then be taken into account by Authority Members when determining the budget requirement. Councillor S Lloyd-Janes noted that whilst this approach had worked well in the past, a formal understanding of the role of both the Fire Authority and Local Authorities would be useful for future budget setting meetings.

Councillor M Williams expressed the view that the Fire Service should be funded from a precept levied annually on each constituent authority by the Fire Authority. The Chair agreed to further discuss this issue at the next Chief Fire Officers and Chairs Meeting.

Councillor C Philpott reminded Members that the Fire Authority was subject to audit by the Wales Audit Office and others for a whole host of measures to ensure that the Service provided a consistent commitment to balancing service delivery against value for money and affordability. Furthermore the recent Annual Audit Letter for 2008/09 confirmed that the Authority's resources were properly used and accounted for in 2008/09, with proper arrangements in place to help it achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. It was therefore felt that the concerns set out in letter were unfounded and not substantiated by any evidence.

Councillor P James concluded that Fire Authority Members were responsible for setting a realistic and affordable budget to meet the needs of the Fire Service. Furthermore, the Authority had a duty to protect the wellbeing of staff and therefore the consequences of any decisions would be borne by the Authority.

8b Following a vote by show of hands, with one abstention, the following was agreed:

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED:

- 1) That for 2009/10, the amount of the contribution to be paid by the Constituent Authorities be revised upwards by £4.57m following consultation, being the transferring of reserves back into the FRA accounts. This is a non cash requirement.*
- 2) That for 2010/11, the net budget requirement at £44,398,689 (+1.73%) be approved (Appendix A)*
- 3) That the budget of £44,398,689 for 2010/11 be part funded by £580k of the above reserves*
- 4) That the Constituent Authorities be requested for the balance of £43,818,689 as their contribution for the 2010/11 year.(Increase of 1.99% on their revenue account)*
- 5) That the Capital Programme attached at Appendix B be approved, leading to the capital financing charges shown as additional in Appendix A.*
- 6) That members re-affirm the vehicle replacement programme attached at Appendix D, leading to the additional leasing charges in Appendix A.*
- 7) Whilst it has been assumed that the majority of vehicles will be leased in the budget build up, the Director of Resources was authorised to decide on the appropriate method of financing of vehicles (be it leasing or otherwise) at the time of procurement.*

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE TRANSPORT PROCUREMENT AUDIT

The Chief Fire Officer introduced a report on the Wales Audit Office Transport Procurement Audit.

Members recalled the negative press coverage in June 2009 relating to the Service's procurement of fire appliances, whereby the Service seized part built fire appliances from the manufacturer which had gone into receivership. It was reported that following

the BBC's coverage of this, the Chair of the Welsh Assembly Government's Audit Committee, Jonathan Morgan AM, referred the matter to Jeremy Colman, the Auditor General for Wales. As a result of this referral, KPMG, the appointed auditor of the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services, conducted a review of the procurement processes, and provided a letter for Jeremy Coleman to be sent to AM Morgan, covering the key issues.

Consideration was given to the correspondence which concluded that Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service handled a difficult situation well, and protected public resources albeit at the cost of a slight delay in the appliances being ready. The review had not identified any prime facie evidence that there had been any misuse of public funds, loss of funds or significant issues within the procurement process.

The Chairman, on behalf of all Members, extended his thanks to the Directors of Delivery and Resources for the actions taken to protect public resources. Members therefore requested that a suitable press release be published in order to highlight the outcome of the review.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. The contents of the letter from Jeremy Colman, the Auditor General for Wales, to the Chair of the Welsh Assembly Government's Audit Committee, Jonathan Morgan AM be noted***
- 2. A suitable press release be published highlighting the positive outcome of the review.***

9 TO RECEIVE THE SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT

The Service Delivery Report was received and noted for information.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted.

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON MID AND WEST WALES INTERNATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE (ISAR) DEPLOYMENT TO INDONESIA 30TH SEPTEMBER 2009.

Members were aware of the disastrous Earthquake which struck Indonesia during September 2009. This terrible event saw the deployment of the International Search and Rescue (ISAR) to the region and resulted in local teams playing a major role in the rescue efforts.

Members were provided with an overview of the Welsh ISAR team, which the Fire Authority had continued to support for a considerable number of years.

Members were pleased to note that the UK teams provided valuable assistance to rescue operations across the region and were particularly effective in searching and identifying locations of casualties trapped in various locations including a collapsed college and a severely damaged hospital.

Members expressed their gratitude to the Mid and West Wales team who played a significant part in the international aid provided to the Sumatra region following the tragic earthquake. Members noted that the hard work and professionalism displayed by the team during the deployment was a credit to the Authority and to Wales.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted.

A letter of thanks be issued to the ISAR members for their assistance with the rescue efforts.

11 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE ATLANTIC ROW CHALLENGE

Assistant Chief Fire Officer P Bates informed Members that two Mid and West Wales firefighters, Mike Arnold, Watch Manager at Pontadawe Fire Station and colleague Simon Evans, Crew Manager at Morryston Fire Station had recently entered the Atlantic Row Race in a fundraising challenge which would see them face months away from their families. A target of 65 days had been set to complete the crossing and they currently looked set to be the only Welsh team in the gruelling Atlantic Row Race.

Members were pleased to note that the pair were taking part in the challenge in order to raise funds for the Fire-Fighters Charity and Tenovus and had set themselves a target of £30,000.

It was reported that their progression could be tracked daily on the Service's website which also featured a counter showing how many days they had left to reach their target, together with a map charting their progress.

Both men had expressed their gratitude to Swansea and Neath & Port Talbot commands, and the Service as a whole for their continuing support without which this challenge would not have been possible.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Members note the contents of the report and wish the pair a safe and successful

challenge

12 TO RECEIVE A REPORT OF THE VISIT TO THE ARMISTICE DAY REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY AT THE MENIN GATE, YPRES, BELGUIM ON 11TH NOVEMBER 2009

Members were reminded that Councillors A Davies, D Davies, J Newbury and J Holmes had represented the Fire Authority at the Armistice Remembrance Service at the Menin Gate on 11 November 2009.

Members reported that they felt honoured to be given the opportunity to represent the Authority at the Ceremony, where they laid a wreath at the Menin Gate in remembrance of those who lost their lives on the Salient during the Great War. The Menin Gate itself bears the names of 55,000 soldiers, who died in and around Ypres between 1914 and 1918. A further 200,000 soldiers were remembered in war cemeteries located around the area.

Councillors marched with the Service's Colour Party from the Fire Station to the Menin Gate. Members extended their gratitude to the Authority for the opportunity and privilege of attending the Ceremony, and to the Colour Party, for its participation in the formal proceedings when it joined many other UK and European Fire Services. Thanks was also extended to DCFO Phil Coleman, Group Manager Gethin Davies and Station Manager Gary Williams for accompanying Members to the ceremony.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The Fire Authority is represented at the Armistice Day Remembrance Service at the Menin Gate in Ypres in 2010.

13 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE RETIREMENT OF THE EXISTING CLERK / MONITORING OFFICER

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the current Clerk / Monitoring Officer to the Authority, who had been in post since April 2002, had notified the Service that he did not wish to renew his contract when the current service level agreement expired on the 31st March 2010.

Members paid tribute to the Clerk for his outstanding contribution to the Fire Authority during his term of office and wished him a happy and healthy retirement.

Consideration was given to proposals for the continuance of such a role, taking cognisance that the post of Monitoring Officer was a statutory appointment pursuant to section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that a review was ongoing in relation to the provision of corporate support services to the Authority, the outcome of which would be reported to a future Fire Authority meeting.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. The post of Clerk / Monitoring Officer to the Authority be advertised, as detailed within the protocol, with a time commitment of, on average, 1 day per week.***

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Following a request from Councillor S Lloyd-Janes, Members were provided with an update of an incident that occurred in an industrial unit at a window UPVC manufacturing company in Llanstephan Road, Johnstown, Carmarthen on 11th December 2009. Members were informed that one hundred personnel tackled the fire and were successful in stopping the blaze spreading to further areas of the unit. ACFO Bates reported that the Service worked closely with the Environment Agency, Police and Local Authority in order to minimize the impact on the local community and an investigation was currently underway.

Councillor P James made reference to the forward work plan for scrutiny. Members were reminded of the importance of such scrutiny exercises to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the Service and were therefore encouraged to provide their nominations for the forthcoming scrutiny exercises in the first part of 2010.