

**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  
**28 MEDI 2009**

**MINUTES  
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Conference Centre,  
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen  
**28 SEPTEMBER 2009**

**11.00 – 12.45**

**76% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:

E Evans

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:

C Philpott

AELODAU/MEMBERS:

Cyng/Cllrs: A P Davies, D Davies, J J J  
Davies, B Hynes, J Holmes, P James,  
B Jones, R Lewis, P Llewellyn,  
R Llewellyn, S Lloyd-Janes, J Newbury,  
D Thomas, G Thomas, F Torrens,  
M Williams, A Woolcock

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:

Cyng/Cllrs: J Dinham, J Dudley, E  
Kirchner, T Tudor

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:

P Coleman, A Howells, P Bates, W  
Edwards, E Aitken, K Jones, C Davies,  
S Flather, B Bassett, J Rose, G Williams

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

None were declared.

**2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/PERSONAL MATTERS**

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Councillor Billy Jones who had been appointed to replace Councillor Roger Smith on the Fire Authority.

**3 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETINGS HELD ON 29<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2009 AND 27<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>TH</sup> June 2009 were confirmed and approved as a true record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009 were confirmed and approved as a true record. The Chair took the opportunity to welcome Assistant Chief Fire Officers Wyn Edwards and Paul Bates to their first Fire Authority meeting in their new role.

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

- I. Resources Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009
- II. Performance Review and Audit Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009
- III. People and Organisational Development Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Performance Review and Audit Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Councillor P James thanked Councillor C Philpott for chairing the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009 in his absence. The Clerk drew attention to item 9 concerning the forward work plan for scrutiny. Members were requested to put forward nominations for the impending scrutiny exercise which would be held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 focussing on the Business Continuity Management and Transport functions.

**5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE SAFER VALLEYS PROJECT**

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Wyn Edwards introduced a progress report for the Safer Valleys Project.

Members were informed that Pembroke Design had been appointed to provide Architectural Services for the Safer Valleys Project and were in the process of developing a design package for the new station.

Members gave consideration to the concept designs for the new station which would comprise a two bay, community fire station to accommodate a retained duty system (RDS) crew. This would ensure the provision of community safety and operational resources within the Amman Valley area. Members were pleased to note that the Authority were exploring opportunities to collaborate with Neath & Port Talbot County Council with a view to sharing resources.

ACFO Edwards reported that the recruitment and training of personnel was progressing well and the response to date had been very encouraging.

Reference was made to the change of crewing at Pontardawe Fire Station whereby a new Self Rostered Crewing (SRC) system would be introduced. The system required a station establishment of twelve personnel to provide a crewing level of five personnel at all times. The shift system would comprise of a primary contract which would be a wholetime duty system contract where individuals would work four day shifts of twelve hours each followed by four days off. The second contract would be a Retained Duty System (RDS) contract where personnel would be required to provide cover for four night shifts comprising of twelve hours each.

Members were informed that the Service would provide high quality accommodation for staff conditioned to SRC for the periods that they were working to their respective RDS contracts. It was anticipated that a first floor extension of light weight construction, above the existing ground floor accommodation would provide the six self-contained accommodation rooms. Consideration would also be given to the refurbishment of other areas of the station in order to improve facilities and support the smooth implementation of SRC. Members acknowledged that the ground floor refurbishment would be dependant upon cost and affordability. Members were also assured that sustainability issues would be a key element throughout every stage of the project.

A discussion ensued on the appointments process for personnel to work at Pontardawe. Members were delighted to note that for those personnel who had chosen not to remain at Pontardawe, the majority would be offered transfers to their first choice of alternative station. Negotiations with the representative bodies had been completed and no formal objections were raised during this period.

Councillor A Woolcock was pleased to note that the staff, who had been recruited for the new station in the Upper Amman Valley, were already very proactive in attending various events and engaging with the community.

Following a question from Councillor A Woolcock, Members were informed that the second appliance would be relocated from Ammanford to the new station in the upper Amman Valley. Members acknowledged that a number of specialist appliances had recently been located at Ammanford, with more planned for the future.

Committee gave consideration to the following timescales:

- Appoint Architect August 2009
- Concept Design September 2009
- Detail Design & Cost October 2009
- Planning Application November 2009
- Procure Contractor November / December 2009
- On site January / February 2010
- Completion +10 months

Members concluded that they were generally pleased with the positive way in which the project was progressing and commended Officers for the work undertaken thus far.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that:***

***Members note the progress made on the Safer Valleys Project.***

## 6 TO RECEIVE THE SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT

ACFO Edwards reported that the Service Delivery Report was compiled from a number of reports received from County Commands and statistical data from the Strategic Planning & Performance and Community Risk Reduction Departments. It was noted that the report varied considerably in the level of detail and format provided by the individual County Commands. A suggested format for future reports was therefore provided for Members' consideration. Members expressed the view that the report needed to be standardised to ensure uniformity and clarity throughout the document.

Committee considered the Service Delivery Report for the period April to August 2009. Attention was drawn to Carmarthenshire County Command whereby concerns were raised with the number of road traffic collisions on the A48 dual carriageway between Carmarthen and Pont Abraham. Members were pleased to note that Carmarthenshire County Council were consulting with stakeholders with a view to implementing a safety strategy to improve safety of travel on to and along the road.

Members were provided with an update regarding a tragic fire incident that occurred on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009 in the Townhill area of Swansea. ACFO Edwards reported that fire crews arrived at the scene within 5 minutes of the call, where they were presented with a house that was well alight. There were two confirmed fatalities and another three members of the household had been hospitalised, but were thought to be in a stable condition. Two firefighters had also been treated in hospital for slight injuries but had since been released. The Fire Service Investigation Officers were working alongside the Police to establish the cause of the tragic incident. ACFO Edwards commended the Officers who showed great bravery and professionalism throughout the incident. Following a question from Councillor J Newbury Members were informed that the dwelling did not have a working smoke alarm; however the Service had attempted to provide the dwelling with a Home Fire Safety Check on several occasions but had not been afforded entry.

Area Manager Chris Davies informed Members that the 'hot strike' initiative had been undertaken following the incident. This Community safety approach involved personnel visiting the area following the fire to engage with the public. Members were pleased to note that Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) had been carried out in every house on the street of the incident. Furthermore, 28 HFSCs were undertaken in surrounding houses and 60 referrals had been generated.

Members were delighted to note that Electric Safety Week (18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2009) had generated 500 HFSCs, which would contribute to making communities safer.

Members conveyed their appreciation to all crew members involved in the incident, including ACFO Wyn Edwards, Incident Commander. Members were grateful that the incident was managed efficiently and with the highest level of professionalism.

Reference was made to an incident in Whitland on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009 whereby Fire appliances from Whitland, Narberth, Crymych and Carmarthen attended the fire in the three-storey property, which was well alight on their arrival. Councillor P Llewellyn reported that it was pleasing to note that a letter of thanks had been submitted from a member of the public to the local press praising the fire crews for their professionalism.

Councillor P James referred to a recent Bike Safe event held in Aberystwyth on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2009. Councillor James enquired whether funding could be obtained to purchase a motorcycle for community safety work, given the proactive approach undertaken by the Service to reduce motorcycle incidents. DCFO Coleman reported that the Service would continue to explore this possibility, however there were many issues that would need to be considered, including maintenance, insurance costs etc. Members were also reminded that the Police and Local Authorities were considered the lead agencies in relation to road traffic collisions involving motorbikes.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***The Service Delivery report be presented at full Fire Authority level***

***The Service Delivery report format be standardised as per the best practice example provided.***

***Members note the contents of the Service Delivery Report for the period April to August 2009.***

## **7 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM KIM SMITH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, FIREBRAKE WALES**

The Chair welcomed Kim Smith, Chief Executive of Firebrake Wales to the meeting who provided Members with an overview of the work of Firebrake including the background of the organisation and its work within the community. Members were informed that the objectives of Firebrake were as follows:

- To raise awareness of fire risks within homes and communities;
- To provide information and support to reduce risks and make communities safer;
- To encourage a co-ordinated approach to fire safety between organisations with a concern for communities and community safety;
- To promote evidence-based practice in fire safety through leading and disseminating information from research.

Councillor R Lewis expressed the view that perhaps funding of the charity should be reviewed; this would enable Fire and Rescue Authorities to direct resources to areas of local priorities and allow for each Authority to undertake local initiatives at their own discretion. The Chair duly reminded Members that the work undertaken by Firebrake emanated from direction provided in part by Fire & Rescue Service personnel.

Following concerns raised by Councillor P James regarding the possible duplication of work undertaken by the Charity, the Clerk reiterated to Members that Firebrake Wales was established from a partnership between the three Welsh Fire & Rescue Services and WAG for the benefit of Fire and Rescue Services and the people of Wales. Members were assured that duplication was minimised as initiatives were undertaken on an All Wales basis to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Councillor P Llewellyn extended her thanks to the Chief Executive of Firebrake for an informative and interesting presentation.

## **8 TO APPROVE THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2008/2009**

Members were reminded that the draft statement of Accounts for 2008/2009 had been approved at the Fire Authority meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> June 2009. Following the audit of the accounts, KPMG had requested that certain amendments be made which were detailed for Members' attention. The amendments had now been made and the Authority was requested to approve the resulting final financial statements for 2008/2009.

The Director of Resources updated members on the progress of amending legislation being considered by the Welsh Assembly Government to allow Fire & Rescue Authorities to directly hold reserves. Members were pleased to note that all Unitary Authorities had formally endorsed the proposal by means of written support for Fire Authorities to retain reserves.

### **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The Fire and Rescue Authority approve the Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.*

## **9 TO APPROVE THE LETTER OF REPRESENTATION REGARDING THE 2008/2009 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Members were aware that the Wales Audit Office required a letter of representation regarding the 2008/2009 Statement of Accounts before the audit of the Financial Statements could be completed. The Director of Resources reported that the purpose of the letter was to declare that Statement of Accounts represented a true and fair reflection of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2009.

The letter, after consideration by the Authority, would then be signed by both the Director of Resources and the Chair.

### **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*That the Letter of Representation be approved and signed by the Chair and the Director of Resources.*

## **10 TO RECEIVE THE ISA 260 REPORT FOR 2008/2009: AUDIT OF ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS – REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE**

The Chair welcomed Gilbert Lloyd and Joanne West of KPMG to the meeting who presented the Audit of Accounting Statements Report to those Charged with Governance. Mr Lloyd thanked the Director of Resources and the Finance Team for their cooperation in working with KPMG. It was noted that all the recommendations contained within the report had been agreed, and many had already been implemented.

Following a question from Cllr Holmes the Director of Resources confirmed that the Authority's assets had been valued by an independent valuer and the figure had been accepted by the Auditor. Members were further informed that the Authority's fixed assets had been valued during 2008/2009 and would be revalued every five years via a rolling programme.

Committee considered the summary of corrections to the accounting statements and Members were informed that the element of provision for lump sum backdated pension payments was expected to be funded by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Members were pleased to note that all the information provided to KPMG had been accurate and it was concluded that no material weaknesses had been identified within the Authority's internal controls. Councillor F Torrens, on behalf of all Members, commended KPMG on producing a concise and clear document.

### **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***That the report be received.***

#### **11 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PROPOSED JOINT EMERGENCY SERVICES AND HER MAJESTY'S COURTS SERVICE FACILITY AT LLANDRINDOD WELLS**

Members were aware that the Authority had acquired land for the purpose of providing a replacement Fire Station and Powys Command HQ near to the Heart of Wales Business Park in Llandrindod Wells.

The Director of Resources reported that exploration for opportunities to collaborate with other Emergency Services and Public Bodies onto the site had been extensive. Three partners had firmly committed to the project through a "partnering agreement" to move the project forward with Phase 1 of the scheme (development of concept design), namely:

Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority (MAWWFRA)  
Dyfed-Powys Police Authority (DPPA)  
Her Majesty's Courts Service (HMCS)

It was also noted that Powys County Council were considering entering the partnership but no firm commitment had been made to date.

Lawray Architects had been successfully procured as a consultancy to deliver the complex design services vital for the successful delivery of such a modern and innovative build project. Members were assured that the objective was to develop best fit solutions to satisfy strict budget, ecology and planning constraints which would factor heavily in the final design.

The Director of Resources informed Members that it was proposed to provide a day crewing fire station on the 6 acre site and office space for Powys County Command HQ, with limited training facilities. Dyfed-Powys Police had specified the requirement of a police station without HQ facilities whereas HMCS would require a court room with supporting facilities. It was also anticipated that there would be an element of shared conference and meeting rooms provided for partners, which would also support wider community needs.

Members were pleased to note that the project would be designed to secure the future provision of the partner services and improve efficiency and effectiveness through rationalising procurement and provision of real estate.

Members were provided with an overview of the timescales, as follows:

- Press release update on project 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009
- Public launch of concept plans 21<sup>st</sup> October. 2009
- Detailed plans and costs target December. 2009
- Planning application early 2010
- Start construction March 2010 (dependant on planning and ecological constraints)
- Completion Summer 2011

Early indication from the design team Quantity Surveyor suggested that the project could be delivered against concept design within budget targets. Further detail would be established at the next stage, where detailed plans and costs would be established against building specification. Councillor J Holmes expressed the view that a penalty clause should be introduced to ensure the project would be delivered within the required timescales and budget.

Members also emphasised that project management would need to be at the forefront of the project's ethos; therefore an experienced Project Manager would be essential to oversee every stage of the project to ensure cost control and value for money.

Following a question from Councillor R Lewis, the Director of Resources confirmed that all ecological issues had been taken into consideration and planning permission for Emergency and Public Services had been granted for developing on Greenfield land. Members were further informed that processes were in place for the protection of newts to ensure that conservation requirements were adhered to.

Members were informed that a public launch of the concept plans would take place at Powys County Hall reception area on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2009 to inform and update local members of the Radnorshire Committee of the progress made to date. Members of the public and other interested parties would be given the opportunity to view plans and leave comments or make contact as appropriate. A press article would also be released to inform the community of the good progress made to date.

Councillor M Williams concluded that it was pleasing to receive a positive paper and congratulated officers on the progress made thus far. It was particularly gratifying that the Radnorshire Committee would receive an update on the project and it was hoped that the profile of Llandrindod Wells would be raised with the strategic development of national importance.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***Members endorse the proposed course of action and continue to receive updates on progress.***

## **TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW MEMBER TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Members were informed that notification had been received from the City and County of Swansea of the following change in Member representation on the Authority:

- Councillor Roger Smith (Labour) replaced by Councillor Billy Jones (Labour)

Accordingly the Authority was required to appoint member(s) to fill the resultant vacancies, taking account of the need to maintain political balance, on Committees as follows :

People & Organisational Development Committee – 1 seat

- Labour nomination in relation to seat formerly held by Councillor Roger Smith

Resources Committee – 1 seat

- Labour nomination in relation to seat formerly held by Councillor Roger Smith

Additionally the notified change also resulted in vacancies on the following:

Standards Committee (seat formerly held by Cllr. Roger Smith). Members noted that the appointment would be for a four year term of office to 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and did not need to reflect political balance on the Authority.

Risk Reduction Planning Working Group (seat formerly held by Cllr. Roger Smith as the City and County of Swansea representative.)

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

- 1. Councillor B Jones be appointed onto the People and Organisational Development Committee***
- 2. Councillor B Jones be appointed onto the Resources Committee***
- 3. Councillor A.P Davies be appointed onto the Standards Committee***
- 4. Councillor B Hynes be appointed onto the Risk Reduction Member Working Group***