

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What's the background to this document?**

Under the provisions of the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994, and with effect from 1 April 1996, the Mid and West Wales (Combination Scheme) Order 1995 established the provision of a Combined Fire Authority covering the new County areas of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath - Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys and the City and County of Swansea.

The Authority has a statutory obligation under the Fire Services Act 1947, as amended, to maintain a Fire and Rescue Service capable of dealing effectively with calls for assistance in the case of fire and other emergencies.

## **Who in the Authority makes decisions?**

The Authority comprises of 23 members appointed by the Constituent Authorities from amongst their own membership having regard both to the relative numbers of electors in the individual constituent authorities' areas and also to the requirement of political proportionality across the combined area. They take all major decisions in the full Authority meeting; or in an Authority committee. The party or political grouping having the greatest overall number of seats on the Authority will also have proportionally more seats on all committees with the seats on committees generally being in the same proportion as the political composition of the whole Authority.

## **What exactly is the Authority's role?**

Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service is committed to protecting people, property and the environment from fire and other emergency events as well as providing other humanitarian services. We will achieve this by involving and informing the community and working in partnership with others to engender the safer communities' ethos, and to provide a value for money service for those who live, work, or visit, Mid & West Wales.

The Authority's role is to deliver proactive and reactive fire and rescue services to the people of Mid and West Wales (comprising the unitary authorities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, City and County of Swansea, Neath - Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Powys) in an open, transparent and cost-effective way; acting in the best interests of Mid and West Wales and its citizens as a whole. This sometimes means that the 'greater good' is more important than individual or particular group interests, but this is what democratic local government is all about. Taking those decisions, after listening to the community, unitary authorities and interested parties is the role of the County Councillors acting collectively as 'Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority'.

## **How is the Authority organised to carry out its role?**

In response to the modernisation impetus at a national level and to ensure effective service delivery at a local level, the Authority has, after extensive consultation, reviewed its organisation and management structure with new arrangements based on a County Command Structure. The new management arrangements were implemented on the 1 st April 2003 onwards. Similarly, the democratic structure of the Authority has been reviewed to ensure that it reflects the requirements of a modern day Fire and Rescue Service where overview and scrutiny form a key element of the performance management framework.