

## **NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Minutes of the meeting of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 16 December 2013 at Flintshire County Council Chamber, Mold. Meeting commenced at 10.30am.

### **PRESENT**

#### **Councillor**

M LI Davies (Chair)  
P R Lewis (Deputy Chair)  
A I Dunbar  
B Dunn  
J G Evans  
J M Evans  
C Hughes  
G Lowe  
D A MacRae  
H McGuill  
R E Parry  
P H Pemberton  
M A Reece  
W P Shotton  
J R Skelland  
A Tansley  
W O Thomas  
R Wright

#### **Representing**

Denbighshire County Council  
Conwy County Borough Council  
Flintshire County Council  
Flintshire County Council  
Anglesey County Council  
Anglesey County Council  
Gwynedd Council  
Wrexham County Borough Council  
Conwy County Borough Council  
Flintshire County Council  
Conwy County Borough Council  
Wrexham County Borough Council  
Flintshire County Council  
Flintshire County Council  
Wrexham County Borough Council  
Conwy County Borough Council  
Flintshire County Council  
Gwynedd Council

### **Also present:**

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); C Everett (Clerk and Monitoring Officer); G Owens (Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer); K W Finch (Treasurer to the Authority); D Docx (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); P Claydon, R Simmons and R Fairhead (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); G W Griffiths (Training and Development Manager); G Brandrick (Senior Fire Safety Manager); K Roberts (Senior Operations Manager); L Roberts (Senior Control and Business Continuity Manager); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); C Dingle (Finance Manager); J Brown (Acting Finance Manager); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer) and S Jones (Member Liaison Assistant).

### **APOLOGIES**

#### **Councillor**

L W Davies  
R Davies  
A Jones  
L A W Jones  
D J Miles  
P Owen  
W R Owen  
W T Owen

#### **Representing**

Anglesey County Council  
Denbighshire County Council  
Wrexham County Borough Council  
Gwynedd Council  
Conwy County Borough Council  
Denbighshire County Council  
Gwynedd Council  
Gwynedd Council

Before moving to the agenda, the Chair informed Members that this was to be ACFO Paul Claydon's last meeting as he will be retiring in March 2014. The Chair paid tribute to ACFO Claydon's work and in particular his work on the health and safety inspection, the operational manager restructure and the Wrexham fire and ambulance project.

The Chief Fire Officer also thanked ACFO Claydon for his work and stated that ACFO Claydon's experience and competence had been of great value to the principal officers' team and the Service over the years.

ACFO Claydon thanked the Chair and the CFO for their kind words and thanked members and officers for their support over the past 10 years or so. He wished the Authority all the best for the future.

## 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## 2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2013

2.1 The minutes of the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 16 September 2013 were submitted for approval.

2.3 **RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true and correct record.**

## 3 MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2013

3.1 The minutes of the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 5 December 2013 were submitted for approval.

3.3 **RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true and correct record.**

## 4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Cllr Wright apologised that none of the Gwynedd members were able to attend the extraordinary meeting due to a Gwynedd Council meeting being held on the same day.

## 5 URGENT MATTERS

5.1 The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that he had received a letter from the Minister expressing her thanks to the CFO, the Service and the Authority for the response to the floods on the coast recently.

## 6 CHAIR'S REPORT

6.1 The report listed meetings and events attended by Cllr M LI Davies and Cllr P R Lewis in their roles of Chair and Deputy Chair of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority between September and December 2013.

- 6.2 The Chair referred to the Emergency Services Carol Service which was very well attended and had been a very enjoyable evening. Cllr Jim Evans echoed the Chair's words and thanked those who had organised the evening.
- 6.3 The Chair also highlighted the Phoenix ceremonies of achievement and other Members noted their appreciation of the work undertaken by the Phoenix staff.
- 6.4 Cllr P Shotton commented that he had very much enjoyed the Long Service and Community Awards evening and was proud to have been part of the event.
- 6.5 Cllr Dunbar thanked the Chair, CFO and DCFO for attending a meeting of the Flintshire County Council's community profile and partnership committee to discuss the Authority's draft improvement objectives; he felt it had been a useful meeting and that the councillors were grateful to have received the presentation.
- 6.6 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**
- 7 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2013-14
- 7.1 The Treasurer presented the report which informed Members about the estimated provisional outturn for the financial year 2013-14.
- 7.2 The report indicated that the Authority would have an underspend of approximately £357k, however, the Treasurer stated that the latest indications showed that there would be a potentially higher underspend which Members were asked to approve for capital use, therefore lessening any increase in the revenue budget in future years.
- 7.3 Cllr Jeff Evans asked about the underspend on retained firefighters as he was concerned that not enough was being done to recruit more people to work the system. A long discussion ensued and officers reminded Members about the work that had been undertaken earlier in the year to recruit firefighters. Members were informed that officers are working with the representative bodies to find a new system that will meet the needs of the modern world and the needs of North Wales.
- 7.4 Other issues raised by Members during the discussion were the unwillingness of employers to let their staff undertake RDS duties; training requirements for RDS firefighters; advertising for RDS firefighters which, Members were reminded, had been done via social media during the last recruitment campaign and was considered a success. Members requested a report on the current situation and how the officers see rural fire cover operating in the future.
- 7.5 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) **note the estimated underspend and agree in principle to set money aside from revenue to fund the capital programme;**
  - (ii) **request a report on the current situation and how the officers see rural fire cover operating in future.**

## 8 DRAFT BUDGET 2014-15

- 8.1 The draft budget for 2014-15 was presented to Members for approval. The report contained proposals in respect of the draft budget for 2014-15 and the forecasts for 2015-16 and 2016-17.
- 8.2 The Treasurer led Members through the report and drew Members' attention to the fact that the Authority has already achieved a £2.4 million saving over the last three years and this was due to careful budget management, change management and planning. At the extraordinary Authority meeting on 5 December, Members had agreed that the priority was to maintain the current level of service provision and to deliver on the objectives set out in the Authority's improvement plan. Therefore, the Treasurer advocated a frozen budget for 2014-15 noting that any inflationary pressures would have to be met from the reserves. The Clerk advised caution and emphasised that this was only sustainable for one year and that the Improvement Planning Working Group would need a longer term plan taking into consideration the balance between budget pressures, service provision and the public risk for 2015 onwards.
- 8.3 The Treasurer advised that the draft budget presented was provisional, and should there be any changes required, an emergency meeting of the Authority would need to be called prior to 15 February 2014 when the constituent authorities must be informed of the contributions required by them. The contributions required from constituent authorities are based on estimated population figures. There have been changes to population figures across North Wales during 2013-14 which has resulted in contributions increasing for some authorities and being reduced for others as noted in appendix B of the report.
- 8.4 Cllr Shotton was pleased to see the commitment to maintain the delivery of 30,000 home fire safety checks per year and acknowledged the importance of prevention. He was also supportive of the prudent approach to the draft budget and proposed the approval of the budget for 2014-15. This proposal was seconded by Cllr D MacRae.
- 8.5 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) approve the draft budget for 2014-15;**
  - (ii) confirm the strategy to be followed to achieve a balanced budget for 2014-15;**
  - (iii) note the budget position for 2015-16 and 2016-17;**
  - (iv) advise the constituent authorities of the provisional contributions required for 2014-15;**
  - (v) approve the draft capital programme and associated methods of financing for 2014-15.**

## 9 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE IN WALES PROJECT

- 9.1 The CFO gave Members an update about the project which had been initiated by the Welsh Government and in particular the Minister. All three FRAs had provided the requested information and a report had been presented to the Minister, however, it has not been shared with the FRAs as

yet. Cllr Lowe commented that the Minister has a duty to report the findings to the Authority and that if the information had been provided in good faith then the WG should share the report with the three FRAs. He proposed that a letter be sent from the Authority asking for the report to be shared immediately.

9.2 **RESOLVED to send a letter to the Minister asking for the report to be shared with the Authority.**

10 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

10.1 The Clerk introduced the report which proposed that the two independent members of the Authority's Standards Committee be reappointed for a further period of four years.

10.2 Celia Blomeley and Jane Eyton-Jones have served one term of four years and are eligible for reappointment for a maximum of one further term of up to four years. Both ladies have indicated that they are willing to be reappointed.

10.3 **RESOLVED to**  
**(i) reappoint Celia Blomeley and Jane Eyton-Jones as independent members of the Standards Committee with effect from January 2014 for a term of four years;**  
**(ii) delegate authority to the Chair, Clerk and Chief Fire Officer to appoint a lay member to the advisory panel for any future Standards Committee appointments as and when they arise.**

11 MEETING DATES 2014

11.1 The report was presented to inform Members of the dates for meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority, Executive Panel and Audit Committee for 2014.

11.2 **RESOLVED to note dates of meetings as follows:**

**Fire and Rescue Authority meetings**

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 – Denbighshire

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014 – Conwy

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014 – Anglesey

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – Flintshire

**Executive Panel meetings to be held 2pm at Fire and Rescue Headquarters**

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014

**Audit Committee meetings to be held 2pm at Fire and Rescue Headquarters**

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2014

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014

12 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

12.1 The minutes of the following meetings were submitted for information:

- Audit Committee meeting held on 23 September 2013
- Executive Panel meeting held on 28 October 2013.

12.2 **RESOLVED to note the minutes for information.**

PART II - Pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public were asked to leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business because it is likely that there would be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 12 to 18 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

13 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14

13.1 The report provided Members with an update on the Authority's estate capital programme. Members were also requested to consider approving additional capital budget of £182,000 and £338,000 for the Nefyn and Tywyn projects, respectively.

13.2 ACFO Claydon updated Members about the latest developments with the Wrexham fire and ambulance station project. The full business case will be submitted to the Welsh Government early in the New Year.

13.3 It was noted that there was some DDA compliance work to be undertaken at the Headquarters building and this work will commence in February 2014. Planned maintenance and minor works have been undertaken at various stations and it is anticipated that all the work will be completed by March 2014.

At this juncture, Cllr G Lowe left the meeting.

13.4 Members were given an update about the Nefyn and Tywyn fire and police station projects. ACFO Claydon explained that these new stations were needed as the current stations were old and lacked suitable facilities including training facilities. The original budgets for the stations had been set in September 2009 but due to the need to concentrate resources on the Wrexham fire and ambulance station, these two projects have been rescheduled. The budgets have now been revised and updated to take account of costs such as the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Measurement standard and inflationary increase. It was noted that the police will contribute towards the capital fund and there will also be a continuing arrangement for their occupation of the building.

- 13.5 It was confirmed that funding has been allocated for the Deeside fire station project to commence in 2014-15 and the project board has been established to compile the project brief. The project board comprises of ACFO Claydon, department heads and representatives from the station.

At this juncture, Cllr P Pemberton left the meeting.

- 13.6 **RESOLVED to**  
**(i) note the contents of the report;**  
**(ii) approve the additional capital budget of £182,000 and £338,000 for the Nefyn and Tywyn projects, respectively.**

At this juncture, Stephen Roberts left the meeting.

#### 14 BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT UPDATE FOLLOWING INDUSTRIAL ACTION AUTUMN 2013

- 14.1 ACFO Fairhead presented the report which provided information about the preparation for, and the impact of, the recent periods of industrial action by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU).

- 14.2 Members were informed of the call outs that had been received during the strike periods and the subsequent action taken by the Service. It was confirmed that the industrial action had not impacted on the Service's response to those incidents.

- 14.3 The CFO briefed Members about the action short of strike (ASOS) issue, which may take many forms including a ban on overtime and the withdrawal of goodwill. ASOS represents a breach in the employment contract and Members were reminded that they had previously agreed, at the extraordinary meeting on 5 December, to delegate authority to the CFO in conjunction with the Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer and Clerk to deal with this fast moving situation in the most appropriate manner.

- 14.4 **RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.**

#### 15 SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- 15.1 The Clerk introduced the report which asked Members to approve a process for the completion of outstanding work on the senior management structure and remuneration levels.

- 15.2 The Clerk and the Chief Fire Officer gave Members an overview of the issues to be reviewed.

- 15.3 Members discussed the report and Cllr B Dunn who had been a member of the senior salary review committee earlier in the year proposed the recommendations be accepted and this was seconded by Cllr D MacRae. Cllr Jeff Evans was against the proposals.

- 15.4 **RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair to:**
- (i) review the capacity required to operate the service at senior management level and make a decision whether to recruit and make a permanent appointment to the third post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer as per the current establishment; and in so doing**
  - (ii) review the comparative job sizing and evaluation of the three Assistant Chief Fire Officers' posts to determine whether there should be parity of pay within a single unified pay grade, provided that the remuneration level of such a pay grade would not exceed the highest current salary of the three existing posts.**
- 15.5 **Cllr Jeff Evans asked that his vote against the proposals above be recorded in the minutes.**