

**NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY  
EXECUTIVE PANEL**

Minutes of the Executive Panel Meeting of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at Fire and Rescue Headquarters, St Asaph. Meeting commenced at 2pm.

PRESENT

Cllr A M Jones (Chair)	Anglesey County Council
Cllr M Ll Davies	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr B Dunn	Flintshire County Council
Cllr A Evans	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr W I Hughes	Anglesey County Council
Cllr P R Lewis	Conwy County Borough Council
Cllr H McGill	Flintshire County Council
Cllr P W Owen	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr W R Owen	Gwynedd Council
Cllr W T Owen	Gwynedd Council
Cllr P Pemberton	Wrexham County Borough Council

ALSO PRESENT:

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); G Owens (Deputy Monitoring Officer); K Finch (Treasurer); D Docx (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); P Claydon and R Simmons (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); G Brandrick (Senior Operations Manager); G W Griffiths (Senior Fire Safety Manager); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer).

Apologies:

Cllr E A Jones	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr A Tansley	Conwy County Borough Council
R Fairhead	Senior Training and Development Manager

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 None.

2 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

2.1 An urgent matter to be discussed in part II regarding the Wrexham project had been brought to the Chair's attention and this meeting was the first opportunity that had arisen to raise the issue with the Executive Panel Members.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September were approved as a correct record.

#### 4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 There were no matters arising.

#### 5 BUDGET OPTIONS 2013-14

5.1 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report which updated Members on the progress made in developing the Fire and Rescue Authority's draft budget for 2013/14.

5.2 Members were informed of recent correspondence received regarding the direct grant funding from the Welsh Government. Confirmation had been received that the Welsh Government had approved the grant funding for Community Risk Reduction initiatives in 2012-13, except for Road Traffic Collision funding and Community Partnership funding. There had been no indication of grant funding for any future years and it was noted that the draft budget for 2013-14 did not contain any additional funding to support those activities currently funded by direct grants from the Welsh Government.

5.3 Members were also made aware of an additional in-year pressure which had emerged, the pension element of the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations. Officers were currently seeking clarification on how to calculate a prudent provision for this liability.

5.4 Following the announcement of the provisional local government settlement on 16<sup>th</sup> October, the NWFRA will not be required to revisit its financial planning assumptions at this stage. The Treasurer explained that the Minister was proposing to top slice the funding across Wales for collaboration projects and this could increase. Members will be kept informed.

5.5 In response to a question from Cllr McGuill about the road traffic workload, the CFO confirmed that the grant funding was not used to support operational activity but rather on various initiatives and interventions mainly with young people to highlight the dangers involved with driving. The CFO also clarified that the Welsh Government had not refused the grant funding for road safety initiatives as yet they had simply not confirmed it yet despite being 8 months into the financial year.

5.6 The CFO also confirmed that there is a statutory duty albeit not an explicit one, on the Authority to make provision for rescuing people in road traffic collisions and protecting people from serious harm which implies educating people and providing support and help. Therefore it will be for the Authority to decide on the level of activity required to discharge its duty.

#### 5.7 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority that the previously agreed means of achieving those savings be pursued;**
- (ii) note the risks around setting a balanced budget for 2013-14;**
- (iii) receive further information, if there are further developments regarding those potential risks.**

## 6 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 6.1 The report provided Members with information relating to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service activity and monitoring performance against improvement objectives. The report covered the first half of the 2012/13 reporting year, covering the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012.
- 6.2 The DCFO explained that the first part reported on the performance against improvement objective 1 of helping to keep people and communities safe by preventing deaths and injuries from accidental fires in living accommodation.
- 6.3 Although the half-year figures relating to objective 1 were higher compared to the same period last year, looking at the average figures over recent years there had been an improvement overall. It was acknowledged that although there was a 12% increase in accidental fires in dwellings, the actual number of accidental fires in dwellings had not greatly increased, from 196 last year to 220 this year.
- 6.4 More people were able to escape unharmed, unaided from accidental fires in dwellings, an indication that occupants had an early warning from a smoke alarm and had devised an escape plan tailored to their individual needs.
- 6.5 It was pleasing to note that 34% of home fire safety checks were completed following a referral from a partner organisation; this exceeded the Service's own target of 25%.
- 6.6 There had been a decrease of 14% in the total number of incidents attended. The Service had attended 3,497 incidents which is notably fewer than in previous years. However, there had been an increase in the number of special service (non-fire) incidents attended – this was due to the increase in flooding incidents.
- 6.7 There had been a decrease of 33% or 566 fewer fires compared to the same period last year, this could be partly attributed to the prolonged wet weather between April and September 2012 as well as the continued fire safety prevention activities undertaken by the Service.
- 6.8 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**

## 7 IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The Chair welcomed Lisa Williams and Ron Price from the Wales Audit Office to the meeting. Lisa Williams from the Wales Audit Office presented the Improvement Assessment letter to Members.
- 7.2 The improvement assessment letter summarised the Authority's compliance with its statutory obligations to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement and the progress on areas for improvement and recommendations previously identified. The letter also provided a brief commentary on relevant issues that had emerged since the last report which included comments on how the Authority was addressing its financial challenges.

- 7.3 Ms Williams confirmed that the Auditor General for Wales was satisfied that the Authority has discharged its improvement planning duties under the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. It was also the Auditor General's belief that, based on work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office, the Authority is likely to comply with the requirement to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement during this financial year as business planning arrangements are well embedded, provide a clear picture of planned actions and are generally outcome-focused. It was noted that during 2012-13 the Authority is planning to revise its performance reporting to members to include progress against improvement objectives.
- 7.4 A public engagement report had been presented to the Audit Committee at its September meeting. This report formed new proposals for improvement, namely, to continue to develop corporate processes to promote public engagement and to develop methods to use and evaluate the results of public engagement activities more widely.
- 7.5 **RESOLVED to note the Improvement Assessment letter.**
- 8 AERIAL LADDER PLATFORM CORRESPONDENCE
- 8.1 ACFO Claydon presented the report which gave Members an overview of the correspondence recently received with regards to the provision of Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs).
- 8.2 Members were reminded of a decision taken by the Authority on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010 to adopt a 30 minute attendance standard for ALPs across North Wales with the consequence that this would reduce the number of ALPs in the Service from four to three. Subsequently, at the Authority meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012, with the impending departure of the oldest ALP, Members resolved to locate the three remaining ALPs at Bangor, Rhyl and Wrexham.
- 8.3 Correspondence had been received from various groups in the Llandudno area regarding continued concerns about the ALP being removed from Llandudno fire station. ACFO Claydon had responded to each letter stating that the NWFRS continues to be committed to delivering appropriate resources to an emergency by the quickest possible means on all occasions.
- 8.4 The letter received from Barmouth Town Council was regarding the attendance of an ALP at an incident in Barmouth. Again, ACFO Claydon confirmed that he had responded to the letter providing answers to the issues raised as well as reassurance that the appropriate managerial action had been taken. In response to Cllr Pemberton's question about a standard appliance attending the incident, ACFO Claydon confirmed that the standard appliance had all the equipment required to deal with that particular incident.
- 8.5 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**

## 9 ATAL TÂN

- 9.1 The Chief Fire Officer gave Members background information about the organisation and explained that he was raising it as an issue at this meeting, as between now and the end of the financial year the Authority will need to take a view on its contribution and continued involvement with Atal Tân. The Trust was currently without a Chair, and the next meeting was due to take place on 20<sup>th</sup> November.
- 9.2 The Chief Fire Officer proposed to provide Members with a written report at the December Authority meeting. Members agreed, and also requested that the Chief Executive of Atal Tân be invited to a future meeting to give a presentation on the work of Atal Tân as well as its aims and objectives.
- 9.3 **RESOLVED to proceed as stated in paragraph 9.2.**

## PART II

### 10 PURCHASE OF DEESIDE AMBULANCE STATION

- 10.1 ACFO Claydon presented the report which provided Members with details of the proposal regarding the potential purchase of the ambulance station in Deeside.
- 10.2 ACFO Claydon gave Members some background information about the Deeside station. The Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) has recently established a 'Make Ready Depot' in Dobshell and therefore no longer requires the use of its premises at Deeside station. As the ambulance station building is attached to the fire station, WAST had given NWFRS the first option of purchasing the property.
- 10.3 The acquisition of the ambulance station would ensure that NWFRS is then in control of the whole site as rights of way currently exist around the rear and side of the fire station.
- 10.4 **RESOLVED to note the opportunity to purchase the Deeside ambulance station property and endorse the proposal to proceed with purchasing the property in the 2012/13 financial year.**

## URGENT MATTER

### 11 VERBAL REPORT ON WREXHAM PROJECT

- 11.1 The Chief Fire Officer gave Members background information about the Wrexham project which had started in 2005. The intention had been to build a tri-service station for fire, police and ambulance. However, North Wales Police had withdrawn from the project in February 2011 as it no longer met its business needs.

- 11.2 ACFO Claydon gave Members a brief chronology of events and costs involved since 2005 and a summary of the current situation. Members had received regular updates at meetings, and the Chair and Deputy Chair have also had regular briefings regarding latest developments.
- 11.3 The Deputy Clerk reminded Members that the issue had been discussed under part II and was therefore a completely confidential matter which was not to be discussed with anyone.
- 11.4 **RESOLVED that a comprehensive written report be presented to the full Authority at its December meeting as an agenda item under part II.**