

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

Minutes of the meeting of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2008 at Dafydd Orwig Chamber, Caernarfon. Meeting commenced at 10.30am.

### **PRESENT**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Representing</b>
T Roberts (Chairman)	Gwynedd Council
L W Davies	Anglesey County Council
M Ll Davies	Denbighshire County Council
G C Evans	Denbighshire County Council
T Evans	Wrexham County Borough Council
M Griffith	Gwynedd Council
P Jeffares	Wrexham County Borough Council
A M Jones	Anglesey County Council
E M Jones	Gwynedd Council
D Mackie	Flintshire County Council
A Minshull	Flintshire County Council
W Roberts	Conwy County Borough Council
A Tansley	Conwy County Borough Council
M Thomas	Conwy County Borough Council
G O Williams	Gwynedd Council

### **Also present:**

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); C P Everett (Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority); K W Finch (Treasurer to the Authority); C Hanks (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); D Docx (Assistant Chief Officer, Resources); R Simmons (Assistant Chief Officer, Organisational and People Development); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); W A Murphy (Senior Operations Manager); R Fairhead (Senior Fire Safety Manager); G Brandrick (Training and Development Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); L W Roberts (Control Room Manager); C Dingle (Finance Manager); S Forrest (Accountant, Treasurer's Department, Conwy County Borough Council); L Marsh (Corporate Planning Assistant); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer) and S Jones (Member Liaison Assistant).

### **PART I**

#### 1 APOLOGIES

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Representing</b>
D Barratt	Flintshire County Council
B Dunn	Flintshire County Council

P C Evans	Conwy County Borough Council
S Frobisher	Denbighshire County Council
G James	Flintshire County Council
T Owen	Gwynedd County Council
R Peacock	Conwy County Borough Council
OFFICER	
P Claydon	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Operational Assurance)

## 2 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

2.1 The Chairman advised that no items had been submitted to the Clerk for consideration.

## 3 MINUTES

3.1 The following minutes were submitted:

i. Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008

3.2 **RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true and correct record of proceedings.**

3.3 The following minutes were submitted for information purposes:

ii. Executive Panel meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

## 4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 No matters arose from the minutes submitted.

## 5 JOINT COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

5.1 The Chief Fire Officer updated Members on the start of the Joint Communication Centre. Fire and Rescue control had moved to the centre at Crud y Dderwen on 7<sup>th</sup> October and the move had been successful. Several incidences of successful joint working had already been noted by officers from both Services.

5.2 Cllr Davies congratulated all staff involved but indicated his disappointment that the media had used pictures of the Chief Constable in local newspapers. In response, it was confirmed that the Daily Post had also used a picture of the Chief Fire Officer and that the joint nature of the Centre had been publicised.

5.3 **RESOLVED to note the update.**

6 CHAIRMAN'S DIARY

6.1 The Chairman presented his report regarding events and meetings that he and the Vice-Chairman had attended since the June meeting.

6.2 The Clerk noted that he had received a letter from the Welsh Assembly Government confirming that the Chairman of South Wales FRA had been made a co-opted member of the Partnership Council (on behalf of all Fire and Rescue Authorities).

6.3 **RESOLVED to note the information contained in the report.**

7 APPROVAL OF THE AUTHORITY'S DRAFT RISK REDUCTION PLAN ACTION PLAN 2009-10

7.1 The report was presented to inform Members of responses received to the consultation on the Authority's draft Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) Action Plan 2009-10; to set out the agreed wording of the Authority in response to the issues raised; to present the recommendations of the Executive Panel in relation to the Action Plan to the full Fire and Rescue Authority.

7.2 The Assistant Chief Officer (Resources) confirmed that the proposals had been considered at length by the Executive Panel and the RRP working group on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

7.3 The Chairman and Chief Fire Officer had met with the Minister on 14<sup>th</sup> October to brief him on the outcome of the consultation, in line with the requirements of the process. The Minister had not indicated that he had any concerns with the proposals.

7.4 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) note the report summarising the response to the consultation on the draft Risk Reduction Plan Annual Action Plan 2009-10;**
- (ii) endorse the draft responses to comments received;**
- (iii) approve the recommendations of the Executive Panel, as set out below:**
  - to progress the Officer Cover Review in order to provide resources for an operational assurance team and community safety work;**
  - to progress the review of crewing of Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) and when the opportunity arises to transfer the funding of the dedicated posts to fund more community safety practitioners on the most appropriate terms and conditions to meet the Authority's objectives;**
  - that the catering arrangements were a management issue and that this proposal should be deleted from the RRP Action Plan;**

- **to undertake a fundamental review into Risk across North Wales in order to produce the full Risk Reduction Plan in 2009/10.**

## 8 DRAFT IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2008-09

8.1 The purpose of the report was to present the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's draft Improvement Plan 2008-09 (incorporating the Risk Reduction Plan action plan 2009-10) for approval prior to publication by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008.

8.2 The Assistant Chief Officer (Resources) led Members through the draft Improvement Plan and highlighted that more work was needed to reduce the number of deaths and injuries from accidental fires in dwellings.

8.3 In response to a question from a Member, it was confirmed that the Welsh Assembly Government had provided Ffynnon software to facilitate comparison between Authorities in Wales. However, performance would also continue to be monitored and compared to 'family group' Authorities in England. The Clerk confirmed that analyzing data would be easier and that it will also be able to hold risk management information.

### 8.4 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) **note the requirement to publish an Improvement Plan for 2008-09 and Risk Reduction Plan Action Plan for 2009-10 before 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008;**
- (ii) **endorse the inclusion of details of the Authority's decision regarding the Risk Reduction Plan Action Plan 2009-10 within the Improvement Plan; and**
- (iii) **approve the draft Improvement Plan 2008-09 incorporating the Risk Reduction Plan Action Plan 2009-10 for publication by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008.**

## 9 PENSIONS REVIEW

9.1 The report was presented to provide Members with the current position on the financing of the New Fire Fighters' Pension scheme. The report also considered the impact of the new pension scheme on the Pension Provision held by the Authority.

9.2 In response to a question from a Member, it was confirmed that the pension arrangement was a 'pay as you go' scheme unlike the Local Government pension scheme and therefore not dependent upon investments to directly fund the scheme.

### 9.3 **RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.**

## 10 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2008-2009

- 10.1 Before considering the report, the Treasurer confirmed that discussions had been held between the Fire and Rescue Authorities, KPMG (auditors) and the Wales Audit Office regarding provisions and creditors. It had been agreed that NWFRA's provisions were true provisions. They are also relatively small compared to Mid & West and South Wales FRAs, and as a result the accounts had been agreed and signed off subject to a minor change.
- 10.2 At a meeting with the Minister, the Chairs of the three Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales had taken the opportunity to raise their concerns on the issue of provisions. The Minister and officials were sympathetic and it is hoped that a better system will be in place for the future. In response to a question from a Member, it was confirmed that it was unlikely that any of the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales would request to become precept authorities.
- 10.3 The report was presented to provide Members with an estimated provisional outturn for the financial year 2008-2009.
- 10.4 **RESOLVED to note the current estimated underspend of £23,118 which is dependent upon the number of incidents attended between now and the end of the financial year.**

## 11 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

- 11.1 The report was presented for monitoring purposes. The Prudential Indicators estimated for 2008-2009 which were approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority in March 2008 had changed due to slippage in the capital programme for 2007-2008. Also, two new Public Works Loan Board loans had been taken out to fund capital expenditure.
- 11.2 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) approve the amended Prudential Indicators;**
  - (ii) note the amended list of counterparties; and**
  - (iii) note the new PWLB loans.**

## 12 CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

- 12.1 The Clerk gave a presentation regarding constitutional review (slides attached). This was in response to the reports of the Wales Audit Office presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority in June 2008 which highlighted the need for the Authority to have a scrutiny/audit function.
- 12.2 Members welcomed the proposal to establish an audit committee and recognised that it would provide a safeguard and protect the interests of

the Authority. The Members supported the proposal that the committee incorporate the scrutiny function.

- 12.3 On the Executive Panel, Members would prefer to continue with the current arrangements of having two members from each Local Authority on the Panel. A suggestion was made that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman could be one of the representatives from their Local Authorities.
- 12.4 In response to a request from a Member, it was agreed that minutes of the Executive Panel meetings would be submitted for information to the next available Authority meeting (even if in draft form pending adoption as a correct record). It was also confirmed that all Members can attend all committees as observers.
- 12.5 **RESOLVED to agree that the Clerk present full recommendations on the options to the Authority at its next meeting in December, responding to the advice given.**

### 13 INFORMATIVE MAGAZINE

- 13.1 The magazine, which shows staff engaged in partnership working and fund raising across North Wales, had previously been circulated to Members. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer asked Members to note the good work of staff at Colwyn Bay station who have raised a lot of money for the Fire Fighters' charity.
- 13.2 The Chairman commented that the magazine should be entered into a competition for such publications.
- 13.3 **RESOLVED that the Informative magazine be accepted.**

## **PART II**

The following report had been excluded from disclosure as defined in Paragraph(s) 12 to 18 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### 14 CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE EVENT OF SEVERE DISRUPTIONS

- 14.1 The report was presented to provide Members with information relating to a national project led by the Chief Fire Officers' Associations to procure a level of resilience in the event of severe disruptions to operational service delivery. The project is commonly known as Fireguard.
- 14.2 The Executive Panel had received a detailed presentation on the project at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> September and following discussions Members had resolved not to proceed with the project and requested that the Chief Fire Officer seek alternative solutions on a partnership basis within Wales.

The Chairman had attended a meeting with Chairs of all the Fire and Rescue Authorities in England and Wales and confirmed that there was little interest or confidence in the project elsewhere.

14.3 **RESOLVED**

- (i) to note the information in relation to the Fireguard Project;**
- (ii) to endorse the resolution of the Executive Panel to withdraw from the project and seek alternative solutions to the issue that will meet local needs;**
- (iii) to support the Chief Fire Officer in developing a local solution in collaboration with colleague Chiefs in Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government;**
- (iv) that the Chairman/Clerk write to all MPs and AMs to ensure that they are all aware of the issue; and**
- (v) that a question be asked at the Assembly's plenary session to ensure the issue is brought into the public domain.**

The meeting concluded at 12.15pm.

**The above minutes, pending any inclusions shown, are approved as a true and correct record of proceedings.**

**Signed:**

**Dated:**