

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

Minutes of the meeting of **North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority** held on **Monday 17 April 2023** virtually via **Zoom**. Meeting commenced at **09.30hrs**.

### **Councillor**

Dylan Rees (Chair)  
Paul Cunningham (Deputy Chair)  
Bryan Apsley  
Marion Bateman  
Carol Beard  
Michelle Walker  
Tina Claydon  
Jeff Evans  
Chrissy Gee  
Chris Hughes  
John Brynmor Hughes  
Dyfed Jones  
Marc Jones  
Gwynfor Owen  
Beverley Parry-Jones  
Arwyn Herald Roberts  
Austin Roberts  
Gareth A Roberts  
Rondo Roberts  
Gareth Sandilands  
Dale Selvester  
Nigel Smith  
Rob Triggs  
Mark Young

### **Representing**

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

### **Also present:**

Dawn Docx  
Stewart Forshaw  
Helen MacArthur  
Stuart Millington  
Dafydd Edwards  
Gareth Owens  
Lisa Allington  
Helen Howard  
Tracey Williams

Chief Fire Officer  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Treasurer  
Clerk and Monitoring Officer  
Executive Assistant  
Head of Finance and Procurement  
Head of Corporate Communications

## **1 APOLOGIES**

### **Councillor**

Adele Davies-Cooke

### **Representing**

Flintshire County Council

## **ABSENT**

### **Councillor**

Neil Coverley

Alan Hughes

Paul Rogers

### **Representing**

Conwy County Borough Council

Denbighshire County Council

Wrexham County Borough Council

It was noted that Cllr Carol Beard and Cllr John Brynmor Hughes may have to leave the meeting early.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest to record.

## **3 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS**

3.1 There was no notice of urgent matters.

## **4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2023**

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2023 were submitted for approval.

4.2 **RESOLVED to:**

**(i) approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the meetings held.**

## **5 MATTERS ARISING**

5.1 There were no matters arising to record.

## **6 CHAIR'S REPORT**

6.1 It was noted that a written paper had been supplied for this meeting to provide Members with information on the meetings and events attended by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) in their official capacities between January 2023 and March 2023.

6.2 The Chair encouraged Members to attend the Phoenix Celebration of Achievement ceremonies if at all possible, as they were both heart-warming and inspiring events.

- 6.3 It was asked whether the Chair felt the Social Partnership Forum to be of benefit to the Authority. The Chair responded that this related to new legislation and felt that they would become very productive as they progressed. The Chair also felt that having a regular audience with the Deputy Minister could only be of benefit to the Authority.
- 6.4 Chief Docx also commented that this was a good opportunity to be able to discuss issues of commonality across the three fire services in Wales, and that the benefits of this would be seen in the future.
- 6.4 **RESOLVED to:**  
**(i) note the information provided.**

## **7 FIREFIGHTER PAY AWARDS AND POTENTIAL INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

- 7.1 CFO Docx presented the Firefighter Pay Awards and Potential Industrial Action paper, which aimed to update Members as to the progress of the firefighter pay dispute and the prospect of industrial action, a subject which Members had been regularly briefed upon over the last six months.
- 7.2 Chief Docx took this opportunity to express how proud she was of the professional manner in which so many Service staff had prepared for the potential of industrial action.
- 7.3 It was noted that there had been no additional funding within Wales to meet the Pay Award, which meant a difference for the Service of around £1m between that which had been projected in the budget and the actual award. This additional sum would therefore need to be provided by the Authority. However, the fact that a settlement had been reached was positive news for all concerned.
- 7.4 One Member felt it amazing that a pay offer agreement could be reached without the offer of financial help from the Welsh Government, and suggested that this should be discussed further at the next Audit Committee meeting.
- 7.5 The Chair confirmed that the matter would also be raised in the next Social Partnership Forum with the Deputy Minister.
- 7.6 It was further noted that, whilst this matter had previously been raised in the Audit Committee and observations had been made, there was no reference to those comments within that meeting in the paper. Chief Docx agreed that the report should better reflect the minutes from the Audit Committee and Executive Panel and future papers would be amended accordingly.

- 7.7 **RESOLVED to:**
- (i) note the acceptance of the NJC pay offer to employees on grey book terms and conditions;**
  - (ii) note the cessation of preparations for industrial action;**
  - (iii) note the financial implications;**
  - (iv) raise the issue of additional funding for the pay award at the Social Partnership Forum; and**
  - (iv) ensure that future papers better reflect the minutes of the Audit Committee and Executive Panel.**

## **8 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2022/23**

8.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the Provisional Outturn 2022/23 paper, which provided Members with an update on the revenue and capital expenditure position for 2022/23, as at 28 February 2023. A number of important aspects were highlighted.

8.2 It was noted that Audit Wales had advised the Service that they did not have the capacity to meet the usual timescales for audit of the annual accounts, and a revised deadline of the end of November 2023 for all Local and Fire Authorities had been put in place. The final draft of the accounts would therefore be provided to Members at the meeting of 17 July 2023.

8.3 Members were informed that, in order to monitor such expenditure, data on sickness absence would be provided as part of performance monitoring from now on.

- 8.4 **RESOLVED to:**
- (i) note the draft revenue and capital outturn projections for the 2022/23 financial year as detailed within the report;**
  - (ii) note the risks associated with inflation and supply chain issues;**
  - (iii) note the risks associated with the ongoing pay negotiations; and**
  - (iv) approve the use of earmarked and general fund reserves.**

## **9 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE AUTHORITY'S CORPORATE PLAN 2021-24**

9.1 DCFO Forshaw presented the Annual Review of the Authority's Corporate Plan 2021-24 paper, which presented Members with the updated Corporate Plan 2021-24 for approval following its annual review.

- 9.2 One Member noted that the report included a significant amount of data, and wondered how this data was communicated to the community and how well it was felt that was done.
- 9.3 DCFO Forshaw confirmed that the report was published on the Service website and that consultation meetings with various stakeholders were being planned with regards to the Emergency Cover review, which would also provide an opportunity for data and information to be given.
- 9.4 It was asked how the data compared to that of other Fire Services within Wales, especially with regards to False Alarms where the data seemed concerning. DCFO Forshaw responded that the Authority received information around all areas of reporting within the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report. An increase in false alarms had been noted in both domestic and non-domestic properties and Audit Wales would be producing a report on attendance at Automatic Fire Alarms across all services within Wales which would be provided to Members at the Authority meeting of 17 July 2023.
- 9.5 One Member noted that one fifth of all calls were false alarms, and that a report to the Audit Committee would be welcomed in order to look into this further.
- 9.6 A question was raised around the statutory indicators and how the figures currently compared to the pre-pandemic period, as they appeared to have risen significantly. DCFO Forshaw confirmed that these figures would be included in the quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.
- 9.7 It was noted that this year, for the first year in North Wales, there had been no accidental dwelling fire deaths and this was due to the efforts of all employees providing prevention advice over the last decade. Members felt that this was something to be celebrated.
- 9.8 Members congratulated the Service both on the above, and for the work that they carry out on prevention within the Community which they felt was both effective and valued.
- 9.9 Deputy Forshaw was thanked for his report, and the data contained within it.
- 9.10 **RESOLVED to:**
- (i) note the refreshed appearance of the 2023-24 Corporate Plan annual review in comparison to previous years;**
  - (ii) note that data contained within it is subject to final audit; and**
  - (iii) approve the 2023/24 Corporate Plan for publication on the Service website.**

## **10 PUBLIC SERVICE BOARDS WELLBEING PLANS - FOR APPROVAL**

- 10.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the Public Service Boards Wellbeing Plans which presented to Members the draft Wellbeing Plans of the three Public Service Boards (PSB) in North Wales for approval.
- 10.2 It was noted that the reports provided covered the period 2023 to 2028 and had been revised and refreshed.
- 10.3 **RESOLVED to:**
- (i) note the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; and**
  - (ii) approve the three well-being plans in their capacity as the Fire and Rescue Authority.**

## **11. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023-24**

- 11.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the Pay Policy Statement 2023-24, which informed Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority's responsibilities arising from the Localism Act 2011 (the Act). A number of important aspects were highlighted.
- 11.2 It was noted that this Policy had previously been supplied to the Executive Panel, who had subsequently approved it.
- 11.3 One Member asked whether it would be possible to look at the financial feasibility of the provision of a car to chief officers within the next Audit Committee meeting, and it was responded that this was in line with National Terms and Conditions and formed part of the remuneration package.
- 11.4 **RESOLVED to:**
- (i) note the requirements of the Localism Act 2011; and**
  - (ii) approve the Pay Policy Statement for the 2023/24 financial year.**

## **12. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

- 12.1 Gareth Owens, Clerk to the Authority, presented to Members the Standards Committee Annual Report. This report presented the Standards Committee's Annual Report to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) as required by legislation.
- 12.2 It was noted that, whilst this was the Standards Committee's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Report, this was the first year that it had become a statutory duty to provide it.

- 12.3 **RESOLVED to:**  
(i) **note the Standards Committee's annual report for 2022/23.**

### **13 RE-APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS**

- 13.1 Gareth Owens, Clerk to the Authority, presented the Re-Appointment of Independent Members paper, which proposed re-appointing two Independent Members to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) Standards Committee.
- 13.2 One Member noted that there were issues with declaring an interest on this item due to the fact that little information had been provided on the Independent Members concerned, meaning it was difficult to establish whether they were known.
- 13.3 The Clerk confirmed that the paper would be amended in the future in order to provide further information in this area. It was noted that an interest only need be declared if the Members concerned were known on a personal level.
- 13.4 Declarations of interest were received by Cllr Dylan Rees and Cllr Gwynfor Owen, as they both knew Gareth Pritchard on a personal level.
- 13.5 It was noted that this decision could only be taken by the Full Fire Authority and could not be delegated.
- 13.6 **RESOLVED to:**  
(i) **re-appoint Gill Murgatroyd and Gareth Pritchard for a period of four years, from 1 September 2023.**

### **14 PROGRESS REPORT ON EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW**

- 14.1 ACFO Millington presented the Progress Report on Emergency Cover Review paper, which provided members with an overview of the purpose of undertaking the Emergency Cover Review and the methodology which would be used. This report outlined the information presented to the Authority Members' working group which had so far met on 14 March 2023 and 04 April 2023.
- 14.2 It was noted that a number of options had been considered, and a blend of three of those options had been requested. The final draft of this option would be scrutinised by the working group on 02 May and the Executive Panel on 19 June, prior to it being brought to the Full Authority meeting on 17 July.
- 14.3 It was noted that this paper was for information purposes and no decisions were required at this stage.

- 14.4 **RESOLVED to:**  
i) **note the contents of this report.**

## **15 ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY 2023-2030**

- 15.1 ACFO Millington presented the Environmental Strategy 2023-2030 which provided Members with an update in relation to the progress made in the Environment and Sustainability working group towards the completion of an overarching Environmental Strategy. Upon completion, the draft strategy would be brought to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) for approval.
- 15.2 Members of the working group had received the first draft of the Environmental Strategy on Friday 14 April 2023.
- 15.3 It was noted that the times of the future workshops referred to in the paper had been changed, and all workshops would now commence at 09:00hrs.
- 15.4 Members from Wrexham County Council were encouraged to put their names forward to sit on the working groups for both the Sustainability and New Training Centre working groups.
- 15.5 ACFO Millington and Environment and Climate Change Manager, Tim Christensen, were thanked for their thought provoking and engaging presentations at the working group meeting of 04 April.
- 15.6 **RESOLVED to:**  
**(i) note the progress made towards the completion of a draft environmental Strategy for the period 2023-2030.**

## **16 NEW TRAINING CENTRE UPDATE**

- 16.1 DCFO Forshaw presented the New Training Centre Update paper which presented an update on the work undertaken on the production of a detailed business case for a new fire and rescue training and development centre in North Wales.
- 16.2 It was noted that a representative from Wrexham was still required for the New Training Centre working group.
- 16.3 It was asked whether enquiries had been made with North Wales Police and the Welsh Ambulance Service with regards to sharing these facilities, and responded that initial discussions had taken place.

16.4 **RESOLVED to:**

- (i) **note the background to reviewing fire and rescue training facilities in North Wales;**
- (ii) **note that the current training provision is reaching its end of life;**
- (iii) **note the next stage of the project has commenced to confirm the suitability of the identified land; and**
- (iv) **note the timescales set out in this report for the provision of a detailed business case for Members' consideration.**

**17 URGENT MATTERS**

17.1 There were no urgent matters.

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 17 July 2023.

**Meeting closed: 11:00hrs**