

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 15 October 2012 at Flintshire County Council Chamber, Mold. Meeting commenced at 10.30am.

PRESENT

Councillor

A Morris Jones (Chair)
M LI Davies (Deputy Chair)
B Dunn [arrived 11am]
A Evans
J G Evans
A Jones
G Lowe
H McGuill
P W Owen
P H Pemberton
M A Reece [arrived 11.15am]
W P Shotton
J R Skelland
W O Thomas

Representing

Anglesey County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Anglesey County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council

Also present:

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

APOLOGIES

Councillor

A I Dunbar
J B Hughes
C Hughes
E A Jones
L A W Jones
P R Lewis
D A MacRae
D J Miles
W R Owen
W T Owen
R E Parry
A Tansley

Representing

Flintshire County Council
Gwynedd Council
Gwynedd Council
Denbighshire County Council
Gwynedd Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Gwynedd Council
Gwynedd Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council

Prior to starting the meeting, the Chair congratulated ACFO Ruth Simmons on completing the Executive Leadership Programme and being top student of the cohort.

The Chair extended the Authority's condolences to Councillor A Tansley following a recent family bereavement. Members were also informed about the passing of Firefighter Chris Burns following a long and difficult illness. The Chief Fire Officer paid tribute to Chris Burns who, as well as being a respected firefighter, had been a valuable member of the FBU and had been the local FBU secretary for a number of years. A minute's silence was held at the meeting as a mark of respect.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

1.1 None.

2 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

2.1 There were no urgent matters.

3 MINUTES

3.1 The minutes of the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 18th June 2012 were submitted for approval.

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

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 There were no matters arising.

5 IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2013-14 CONSULTATION

5.1 The DCFO introduced the report which asked Members to approve the contents of the draft Improvement Objectives 2013-14 consultation document.

5.2 The DCFO explained that the Improvement Plan Working Group which consisted of the membership of the Executive Panel had met several times during the summer and the draft improvement objectives were now recommended to the Authority. Members were invited to comment on the draft consultation document.

5.3 Cllr A Jones referred to page 30 of the consultation document and felt that the targets should be included in the report in order for the Authority to know which targets and outcomes had been achieved.

5.4 Members enquired about the Service's involvement with flood incidents and the extent to which FRAs should be involved in planning decisions around housing in potential flood areas and whether there should be statistics and data regarding call-outs to flood incidents. The CFO replied that flood prevention planning matters were the responsibility of local authorities rather

than the fire and rescue authority. Members were reassured that the Service works closely with the Environment Agency on environment-related issues.

- 5.5 Cllr McGuill referred to page 32 of the consultation document which stated that 98% of calls were answered within 20 seconds and asked what happened to the other 2% and whether the information should be included in the document for completion. Assurance was provided that the 2% of calls not answered within 20 seconds were attended to.
- 5.6 **RESOLVED to approve the contents of the document 'Our plans for fire and rescue services in North Wales' for public consultation, subject to the addition of targets.**

[Cllr Brian Dunn arrived at this juncture.]

6 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2012-13

- 6.1 The report provided information about the estimated provisional outturn for the financial year 2012-2013. There are current indications of a projected underspend of £640,122. The Treasurer explained that part of it is planned, part of it is due to consequences of other issues and there are variances under some budget headings as set out in the report. However, this was an estimated underspend and it could change depending on activity between now and the end of the financial year.
- 6.2 In relation to energy costs, Cllr A Jones asked whether there were buildings where renewable energy, for example solar panels, could be used. ACFO Claydon explained that energy usage is monitored carefully and it was agreed to give Members a training/information session on facilities management within the Service prior to the next Authority meeting.
- 6.3 Cllr A Jones asked about the subscriptions budget which had increased since the previous year; the DCFO explained that this was due to an increase in the cost of CFOA subscription part-way through the year which officers were not aware of when setting the budget.
- 6.4 There had also been an increase in the projected outturn for facilities management and it was explained that this was due to the delays with projects in the capital programme, for example the Wrexham fire/ambulance station project, which meant that fees had to be covered by the revenue budget rather than from the capital budget.
- 6.5 Cllr P Pemberton asked about the vacant ACFO post and whether this was causing a problem for the organisation. The CFO confirmed that it is constantly under review and that he regularly discusses the issue with the Chair.
- 6.6 **RESOLVED to note the estimated underspend.**

[Cllr M Reece arrived at this juncture.]

7 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

- 7.1 The report was presented in accordance with the requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance that Prudential Indicators are monitored on a regular basis and any significant changes approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority. Similarly, under the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management any changes in long term borrowing and changes to the Authority's counterparties need to be reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 7.2 The report had been presented to the Audit Committee for review on 24 September 2012. Members of the Audit Committee had no major observations nor could find any major risks in the report and would recommend it be approved by the Authority.
- 7.3 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) approve the amended prudential indicators set out in appendix A of the report;**
 - (ii) note the counterparties as set out in appendix B of the report; and**
 - (iii) note the new loans with PWLB, Tendring District Council, Bath and NE Somerset Council, London Borough of Ealing and Derbyshire Superannuation.**

8 SERVICE FLEET PROVISION

- 8.1 ACFO Claydon presented the report about the fleet provision within North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.
- 8.2 The Fleet department is based at the Service's workshops in Llandudno Junction and for 2012/13 its revenue budget is a little over £880,000. There are various pressures on the budget including the variances of fuel prices and the exchange rates affecting the cost of vehicle parts. There are strict rules and regulations in relation to the servicing and maintenance of equipment and it is therefore imperative that the Authority maintains the vehicle replacement programme which is embedded into the overall management of the fleet. As well as ensuring that vehicles are only utilised during their serviceable life, the programme provides an active and effective tool in assisting capital budget planning in the medium and longer term.
- 8.3 It was agreed to invite Members to visit the Fleet Department and workshop in Llandudno Junction following the next meeting of the Authority at Conwy.
- 8.4 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**

9 DRAFT ASSESSMENT OF THE AUTHORITY'S PERFORMANCE IN 2011-12

- 9.1 Members were asked to approve the draft assessment of the Authority's performance in 2011-12. The Authority is required to publish the information by 31st October in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

- 9.2 The report provided an assessment of how the Authority had discharged its general duty to improve and its progress against the improvement objectives it set itself for the previous year (2011-12). It also summarised its collaborations, and its performance against specified national and local performance indicators and measures of success.
- 9.3 The DCFO led Members through the document and reminded them that in addition to the Authority's two main restated objectives, the Authority is also working towards another 7 general improvement objectives and 3 resource objectives which are all detailed in the assessment of performance report together with measurements of success against each objective.
- 9.4 Cllr P Shotton commented that he had attended the Phoenix presentation at Mold fire station and was inspired by the confidence and the teamwork of the young people. He was also pleased that the course is accredited and that the initiative is continuing to the future.
- 9.5 Cllr H McGuill asked about the increase in the number of ill-health retirements and the Chief Fire Officer explained that this was due to a change in policy of how the Service dealt with long term ill-health.
- 9.6 **RESOLVED to approve the draft assessment of the Authority's Performance in 2011-12 for publication before the statutory deadline of 31 October.**

10 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

- 10.1 The Deputy Clerk introduced the report which asked Members to consider and approve further amendments to the Authority's standing orders.
- 10.2 Amended standing orders had been presented to the Authority meeting in June 2012 and during the subsequent revision and finalising of them, it had become apparent that some details had been omitted from Standing Order 12. The report submitted to Members detailed two amendments to Standing Order 12 2 (ch) and Standing Order 3 (c), however, Members were asked to ignore the amendment to 2 (ch) as it was unnecessary.
- 10.3 It was therefore **RESOLVED to approve the amendment to Standing Order 12 3 (c) to read as follows:**

Standing Order 17 (minutes) shall apply to the Standards Committee but otherwise the following standing orders of the Authority shall not apply to the Committee: 3,4,5,6,7,8,20, 27 and 28.

11 NATIONAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

- 11.1 The Chief Fire Officer introduced the report which provided Members with an update about the work being undertaken under the direction of the National Issues Committee (NIC).

- 11.2 The NIC had met twice and work streams had been established to consider collaboration in various areas of the three fire and rescue services in Wales. The Chief Fire Officer reiterated that the NIC did not have decision-making powers and that any proposed changes would be submitted to each FRA for individual consideration.
- 11.3 Cllr P H Pemberton recognised that collaboration was required, but asked that the Authority ensured it maintained its individuality. The Chair acknowledged Cllr Pemberton's concern and stated that it was important for collaboration to be seen in action as much as possible whilst maintaining the Authority's independence.
- 11.4 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**
- 12 UPDATE ON REGIONAL SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD AND POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
- 12.1 The Deputy Clerk updated Members about the Regional Safer Communities Board. Its inaugural meeting had been held in July 2012, and the terms of reference had been approved. The next meeting will be held on 1st November.
- 12.2 The Deputy Clerk also gave Members a brief update about the latest developments in relation to the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections. A combined briefing on community safety had been sent out to candidates to ensure they were given a consistent message with comprehensive coverage. The Crime Panel will consist of members of local authorities and two independent persons, and it was noted that the advertisement for the independent persons had been published.
- 12.3 An officer from the Fire and Rescue Service had been working on a briefing regarding the work of the Service to be provided to the successful candidate.
- 12.4 **RESOLVED to note the update.**
- 13 MINUTES OF MEETINGS
- 13.1 The minutes of the following meetings were submitted for information:
- Executive Panel meetings held on 16th July and 17th September
 - Audit Committee meeting held on 24th September
- 13.2 Members were asked to ratify the decision of the Audit Committee to appoint Cllr J R Skelland as Chair and Cllr W O Thomas as Deputy Chair of the committee. **RESOLVED to ratify both appointments.**
- 13.3 **RESOLVED to note the minutes for information.**