NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of **North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority** held on **Monday 20 April 2026** virtually via **Teams**. Meeting commenced at **09.00**.

Councillor	**Representing**
Dylan Rees (Chair)	Anglesey County Council
Mark Young (Deputy Chair)	Denbighshire County Council
Carol Beard	Conwy County Borough Council
Tina Claydon	Flintshire County Council
Paul Cunningham	Flintshire County Council
Ann Davies	Denbighshire County Council
Jeff Evans	Anglesey County Council
Ian Hodge	Flintshire County Council
Alan Hughes	Denbighshire County Council
Chris Hughes	Conwy County Borough Council
John Brynmor Hughes	Gwynedd Council
Gareth R Jones	Conwy County Borough Council
Charlie McCoubrey	Conwy County Borough Council
Gwynfor Owen	Gwynedd Council
Arwyn Herald Roberts	Gwynedd Council
Austin Roberts	Conwy County Borough Council
Gareth A Roberts	Gwynedd Council
Rondo Roberts	Wrexham County Borough Council
Paul Rogers	Wrexham County Borough Council
Gareth Sandilands	Denbighshire County Council
Gareth Williams	Gwynedd Council
Antony Wren	Flintshire County Council

Also present:

Dawn Docx	Chief Fire Officer (CFO)
Helen MacArthur	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)
Justin Evans	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)
Anthony Jones	Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)
Dafydd Edwards	Treasurer
Gareth Owens	Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Matt Powell	Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Elgan Roberts	Head of Finance and Procurement
Steve Morris	Head of ICT
Llinos Evans	Head of Corporate Communications
Paul Kay	Head of Fire Safety
Elin Hughes	Culture Champion
Heledd Davies	Atebol Translation Services
Lisa Allington	Members' Services
Ffion Evans	Executive Assistant

The meeting commenced at 09:00 with a training session around Prevention and work with young people.

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor	**Representing**
Bryan Apsley	Wrexham County Borough Council
Chrissy Gee	Flintshire County Council
John Ifan Jones	Anglesey County Council

ABSENT

Councillor	**Representing**
Marc Jones	Wrexham County Borough Council
Beverley Parry-Jones	Wrexham County Borough Council
Dale Selvester	Flintshire County Council

The above apologies were offered and accepted.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1. The Treasurer declared an interest in Item 19, the Role of the Treasurer (section 151 Officer).

3 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 There were no notices of urgent matters.

4 MINUTES OF THE NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2026

4.1 The minutes of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) meeting held on 19 January 2026 were submitted for approval.

4.2 The minutes were proposed as an accurate reflection of the proceedings of the meeting. This was seconded with all in favour.

4.3 The Chair noted that in relation to paragraph 4.3, the proposed changes to the governance of fire and rescue authorities in Wales, the legislation to implement this had been passed by the Welsh Government at the end of March 2026.

4.4 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Approve the FRA minutes from 19 January 2026 as a true and correct record of the meeting held.

5 CHAIR'S REPORT

5.1 It was noted that a written paper had been provided to Members to inform them on the meetings and events attended by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority in their official capacities between January and March 2026.

5.2 The Chair reminded Members that the 30-year celebration of the creation of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) would be taking place between 12:00 and 14:00 in Rhyl Community Fire Station on Wednesday 22 April 2026 and all were encouraged to attend this important event.

5.3 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Note the information provided within the paper.

6 CULTURAL CHAMPIONS UPDATE REPORT

6.1 CFO Docx delivered the Cultural Champions update report which provided Members with an overview of recent activity and workstreams led by the Culture Champions. Elin Hughes, one of the Culture Champion, was welcomed to the meeting.

6.2 It was asked how the systems and processes for improving culture were being embedded long term to ensure continued improvement. The CFO responded that the development of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) was key as part of this embedding. They were currently being consulted on, and work was taking place with Representative Bodies to ensure that they were meaningful for all. The KPIs would then be taken to the Culture Improvement Board at their next meeting in May 2026 where they would be formally adopted and would be reported on as part of the standard performance reports to Members.

6.3 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Note the ongoing programme of improvements led by the Culture Champions.

7 EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW

7.1 ACFO Anthony Jones presented the Emergency Cover Review paper which provided Members of the Authority with an update on the work of the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) in response to the recommendation from the 20 January 2025 meeting for officers to continue to devise and test alternative solutions with representative bodies, within the agreed budget, to address emergency cover in rural locations.

7.2 A Member asked if the reported overtime reduction was sustainable in the long term, and ACFO Jones responded that it was. The first full three months of the pilot had now been completed and although a full 12-to-24-month period would be required to fully assess the impact, the trajectory for the improvements to be sustained looked positive.

7.3 It was asked if the pilot might be affected by any increase in call outs as wildfire season approached, and if there were there any turn out figures that could be provided to Members for the nucleus stations.

7.4 ACFO Jones responded that daily availability planning ensured that the 18-pump daytime availability was maintained, and that this had been achieved on 100% of occasions since reporting had commenced. The Service was able to carry out some prediction of wildfire incidents and that the pilot provided a better starting position as it put wholetime staff in rural areas where there had previously not been cover.

7.5 ACFO Jones further confirmed that turn out figures for Dolgellau and Porthmadog, were available but not currently to hand and so these would be sent out to Members outside of the meeting.

7.6 A Member noted that the main purpose of the work around the Emergency Cover Review was to improve cover in rural areas and asked if the Service was satisfied that the improvement was getting closer to the targets set and asked how it was progressing.

7.7 ACFO Jones responded that the Authority had previously set a standard of 18 pump daytime availability and whilst this had always been maintained, it had previously been at a higher cost. The ECR had been tasked with maintaining that 18 pump standard, but in a more efficient and effective way. Officers were pleased that this was now happening and availability was operating within existing budgets and utilising staff more efficiently and effectively. There was also added social value as wholetime posts were now available in areas where they previously had not been, and this was also providing opportunities for on call staff in those areas to move through to wholetime positions.

7.8 It was asked what lessons had been learned as part of the ECR process and how these were being embedded. ACFO Jones acknowledged that the Service had been on this journey since 2023 and had learnt a lot throughout that time, particularly were working with Representative Bodies was concerned. This working relationship had improved, in no small way due to the implementation of the Collective Agreement, and more professional and effective working practices with Unions were now in place. The recent implementation of the Social Partnership Duty had also served to formalise that improvement in working practices.

7.9 The CFO further advised that this improvement had been mutual and the relationship between the Service and Representative Bodies was now based on a mutual respect which had resulted in a much more positive approach.

7.10 A Member queried if the reduction in overtime because of the implementation of the ECR had been received well by affected staff, and ACFO Jones responded that the benefits of the pilot appeared to outweigh any negative effects.

7.11 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Note that officers have continued to work with representative bodies in social partnership to develop a way forward with the ECR;

ii) Note that progress has been made in the launch of the full pilot scheme of the Collective Agreement on 1 January 2026; and

iii) Appreciate the continued efforts of all parties to regularly monitor and review the pilot to ensure that it remains fit for purpose

8 HWB AWEN TRAINING CENTRE PROJECT UPDATE

8.1 ACFO Justin Evans summarised the Hwb Awen Training Centre Project update which gave an update on progress with the Hwb Awen Training Centre Project, including governance activity, site status, communications and engagement planning, and emerging external considerations.

8.2 The Training Centre Member Champion acknowledged the team's hard work and asked if an update around funding could be provided. ACFO Evans confirmed that the project was currently working towards RIBA stage 2 which would put the Service in a better position to have those necessary funding conversations. It was anticipated that RIBA stage 3 whereby the project would achieve design maturity would be reached in late 2026 with the associated gateway 3 decision expected around September 2026. At this stage the risk positions and certainty around cost would be reached and if external funding had not been secured, the position would be clearly set out to Members with available options, implications and the risks associated with not continuing with the project.

8.3 The CFO confirmed that an awareness package was being developed to encourage support from the new Members of the Senedd following the Welsh Government elections on 7 May 2026. The Chair further advised that a meeting had already taken place prior to the pre-election period with Rhun ap Iorwerth, the Leader of Plaid Cymru, to explain the risks facing the Service and the importance of funding for this project.

8.4 ACFO MacArthur noted that a training centre funding group had been established and the workstreams within that group included working with Welsh Government officials, identifying which politicians to engage with and communication with other public sector partners.

8.5 Members were advised that as no lobbying could take place during the pre-election period, this had limited the amount of detail that could be shared at this time.

8.6 A Member asked for clarification as to what options would be available if full funding for the project was not secured. ACFO MacArthur confirmed that these options would be put before Members as part of the next iteration of the project.

8.7 **RESOLVED to:**

I) Note the progress being made with the Hwb Awen Training Centre Project.

9 FINANCIAL STRATEGIES AND STATEMENTS FOR 2026/27

9.1 Elgan Roberts, Head of Finance, delivered the Financial Strategies and Statements for 2026/27, the purpose of which was to present the Authority with the statutory financial strategies and statements for 2026/27: the Capital Strategy, the Treasury Management Strategy, and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement. These documents set the framework for capital investment, borrowing, and repayment of debt.

9.2 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Approve the Capital Strategy;
ii) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy including prudential indicators; and
iii) Approve the Annual MRP Statement 2026/27.

10 MEDIUM-TERM RESOURCE STRATEGY 2026-30

10.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the Medium-Term Resource Strategy 2026-30 providing Members with the financial framework to support delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024–2029 and set out the Authority’s medium-term financial outlook, risks and planning assumptions.

10.2 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Approve the Medium-Term Resource Strategy 2026–2030.

11 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27

11.1 ACFO MacArthur summarised the content of the Pay Policy Statement 2026/27 which informed Members of the Authority of their responsibilities arising from the Localism Act 2011 (the Act).

11.2 It was noted that the Act requires the Authority to prepare an annual Pay Policy Statement for approval before the commencement of the financial year to which it relates.

11.3 ACFO MacArthur advised that there had been no tangible indication of settlement of the pay award. The Green Book (corporate staff) offer had been rejected by Unions and remained in negotiation. Any resulting agreement would be backdated to 1 April 2026. The Grey Book (operational staff) pay award would be effective from 1 July and negotiations remained ongoing based on pay modernisation as well as in-year cost of living.

11.4 The amount included within the budget had been set on expectations across the fire sector and was aligned to the local authorities. If the settlement resulted in a figure above that within the budget setting, there was some resilience in reserves to cover this increase for one year only. The current expectation was for 3.8%.

11.5 **RESOLVED to:**

- **i) Note the requirements of the Localism Act 2011; and**
- **ii) Approve the Pay Policy Statement for the 2026/27 financial year**

12 COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2026/27

12.1 ACFO Jones presented the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2026/27 which provided an overview of the feedback received from the public consultation on the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan (CRMIP) 2026-2027 and the associated Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), and to seek approval of the final version of the aforementioned documents.

12.2 **RESOLVED to:**

- **i) Note the content of the Consultation report; and**
- **ii) Approve the attached CRMIP 2026-27 and associated EqIA for publication.**

13 FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEMES DISCRETIONARY POLICY STATEMENT

13.1 ACFO MacArthur delivered the Firefighters Pension Schemes Discretionary Policy Statement paper which informed Members of the requirement for the Scheme Manager, the Authority, to produce and keep under review a Firefighters Pension Discretionary Policy Statement.

13.2 Members were reminded of the previous approval of the resolutions within the Firefighters Pension Scheme Discretionary Policy Statement including the proposal that, on behalf of the scheme manager, decisions will be delegated on a day-to-day basis to officers of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service).

13.3 Whilst the Service had taken forward a Discretions Policy Statement for approval in July 2025, in order to correctly reflect the minor changes to the reinstatement of survivor benefits, under Rule C9 - Reinstatement of Widow's pension the Service was now seeking approval for the below addition to be included in this previously approved policy.

13.4 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Approve the minor changes being introduced for the reinstatement of survivor benefits, under Rule C9.

14 FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEMES LOCAL PENSION BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26 AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

14.1 The Treasurer presented to Members of the Authority the Local Pension Board annual report detailing the work undertaken during the 2025/25 financial year, along with the Terms of Reference for the Local Pension Board for 2026/27.

14.2 The Treasurer was thanked for his work as Chair over the last two years, and in turn gave thanks to the Pensions Team for their support.

14.3 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Approve the Local Pension Board 2025/26 Annual Report; and
ii) Approve the Terms of Reference of the Local Pension Board for 2026/27.

15 DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION CYMRU ANNUAL REMUNERATION REPORT 2026/27

15.1 Gareth Owens, Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Authority, summarised the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru Annual Remuneration Report for 2026/27 which informed Members about the proposed rates of member remuneration for the financial year 2026/27.

15.2 **RESOLVED to:**

- **i) Note the DBCC's determinations in relation to members' allowances and remuneration with effect from 1 April 2026; and**
- **ii) Give delegated authority to the Clerk to update the schedule of member remuneration within the Authority's constitution and to make any necessary amendments to the 2026/27 schedule from time to time during the municipal year, to reflect any changes in membership of the Authority, or because of any supplementary reports issued by the DBCC.**

16 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO SERVE ON THE AUTHORITY'S STANDARDS COMMITTEE

16.1 Gareth Owens gave his recommendation to Members that they appoint David Davies to the Authority's Standards Committee, and a background of the appointments process was provided.

16.2 A Member noted that it was difficult to recommend someone to a post when there had been no background information provided. Assurances were given as to his experience and skills, and it was noted that Cllr Dylan Rees and Cllr Gareth Sandilands had been part of the appointment panel and gave their recommendation for the appointment.

16.3 Members were advised that another recruitment process would be commenced to fill the second vacancy on the Standards Committee, and that there would be two further vacancies arising in September 2027.

16.4 **RESOLVED to:**

- **i) Appoint David Davies for a period of four years from 20 April 2026; and**
- **ii) Thank Julia Hughes and Sally Ellis for their hard work and commitment.**

17 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2025-26

17.1 Elgan Roberts presented the Provisional Outturn 2025-26 to Members which provided an update on the revenue and capital expenditure forecast for 2025/26, as of 31 March 2026.

17.2 In response to an earlier question from a Member around the effect that the increase in fuel costs was having on the budget and how that was being managed, Mr. Roberts confirmed that gas and electricity prices had been fixed for the next five and two and a half years respectively providing a certainty of cost. The Service was currently in the process of decarbonising its fleet by moving away from diesel to electric and implementing Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel for station appliances so reducing the reliance on the movement of the market and any resulting increase in fuel costs.

17.3 It was further asked how the increase was being managed in real time. And ACFO MacArthur advised that inflationary increases were being covered within the existing budget but should costs continue to rise, it may be necessary to request the use of reserves. The current economic climate was also impacting on borrowing rates which would have to be factored in. the current availability of fuel was not impacting the Service operationally and was being managed internally. It was confirmed that if supply ever became an issue, emergency service personnel and vehicles would be prioritised.

17.4 **RESOLVED to:**

- **i) Note the projected revenue outturn position and the projected capital slippage for the 2025/26 financial year, as detailed within the report;**
- **ii) Note the risks associated with the provisional outturn and recognise that the figures forecasted in this report are prudent; and**
- **iii) Approve the movement to/from earmarked and general fund reserves.**

18 URGENT MATTERS

18.1 There were no urgent matters to consider.

It was proposed that the meeting move to Part II to discuss the paper in relation to the Role of the Treasurer (Section 151 Officer). This motion was seconded with all in favour. All those with an interest in this item left the meeting.

PART II meeting commenced 11:14

19 THE ROLE OF THE TREASURER (SECTION 151 OFFICER)

19.1 The Treasurer gave an overview of the background to this proposal and advised Members that he gave his full support. At this juncture, the Treasurer left the meeting.

19.2 The Chief Fire Officer delivered the paper on the Role of the Treasurer (Section 151 Officer) and confirmed that this would be a move to a model like that of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and one that Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service also planned to adopt.

19.3 The CFO further advised that contracts of employment would be amended accordingly.

19.4 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Support the proposed arrangements for internalising the statutory Section 151 Officer role and recommend approval of the appointments by the full Authority on 20 April 2026; and

ii) Authorise the Clerk to update references to the Treasurer within the Constitution accordingly.

Part II Meeting concluded 11:20

Members and Officers were thanked for their participation.