

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE PANEL

Minutes of the **Executive Panel** of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 16 September 2024, virtually via Zoom. Meeting commenced at 14.00hrs.

Councillor

Cllr Dylan Rees (Chair)
Cllr Carol Beard
Cllr Chrissy Gee
Cllr Chris Hughes
Cllr Gareth A Roberts
Cllr Rondo Roberts (left 14:37)
Cllr Paul Rogers (from 14:19)
Cllr Gareth Sandilands
Cllr Rob Triggs

Representing

Ynys Môn County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Gwynedd County Council
Wrexham County Council
Wrexham County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Gwynedd Council

Also present:

Dawn Docx
Stewart Forshaw
Helen MacArthur
Justin Evans
Dafydd Edwards
Anthony Jones
Tracey Williams
Gareth Owens
George Jones
Ellie Williams

Chief Fire Officer
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Treasurer
Area Manager
Head of Corporate Communications
Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Atebol - Translator
Executive Assistant

1.0 APOLOGIES

Councillor

Cllr John Ifan Jones

Representing

Anglesey County Council

ABSENT

Councillor

Cllr Paul Cunningham (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Alan Hughes
Cllr Dale Selvester

Representing

Flintshire County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest to record.

3.0 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 There was no notice of urgent matters.

4.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JUNE 2024

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2024 were submitted for approval.

4.2 RESOLVED to:

- i) approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting held.**

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 CFO Docx advised Members on the Audit Wales report which was published 10th September and will be formally presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority in October.

6.0 NEW TRAINING CENTRE OPTIONS (PRESENTATION)

6.1 ACFO Evans presented the New Training Centre options to Members.

6.2 NWFRS faces significant challenges as risk in our communities evolve. The need to adapt training to suit these changes is pivotal in order to uphold our duty to protect firefighters and the public. Studies have linked occupational firefighting with specific cancers, highlighting the importance of this issue.

6.3 Achieving high quality output and operational efficiency during times of crisis requires high quality training.

6.4 Essential works were completed at the Dolgellau site last year however, complaints from the public in relation to smoke generated from lighted fires during training have escalated to Welsh Government level. In addition, inadequate changing facilities for female firefighters has often meant they must choose between dignity or their health.

6.5 There are developing proposals to open a centralised training facility in North Wales which meets our core needs. A site has been identified and completion of purchase is close.

- 6.6 ACFO Evans advised a full business plan with four options will be presented to the FRA 21st October to ensure Members are fully sighted and briefed on each option, the plan will include a detailed budget forecast for each option.
- 6.7 The Chair met with the FBU who are engaged in this process, stating there has never been a more necessary time. Recommendations following the enquiry into Grenfell raised concerns on inadequate training.
- 6.8 Deputy Chair thanked ACFO Evans for the presentation and expressed support for the proposed plans and the need for providing high quality training.
- 6.9 DCFO Forshaw expressed support for the plans, the long-term vision and the need for firefighters to receive immersive and realistic training. Risks in relation to contaminants and lithium iron continue to emerge despite us not having the facilities to train and the reduced incidents we are attending gives less opportunity to expand on training and experience.
- 6.10 Cllr Sandilands raised the strained economic climate we are currently facing stipulating the need to outlay the expense on a short- and long-term basis. The need for the decision to be made based on sound finances was raised.
- 6.11 CFO Docx thanked Cllr Sandilands for raising this issue and advised this will be incorporated in the business case presented to the FRA on 21st October.

6.12 RESOLVED to:

- i) Note the information given during the presentation.**

7.0 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 23-24

- 7.1 Area Manager Anthony Jones presented the Performance Assessment for the financial year 2023-24. Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to present Members with the APA for the period of 2023/24.
- 7.2 Section 15 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure (2009) requires the FRA to arrange the publication of the Authority's assessment of performance during the financial year by 31st October
- 7.3 Schedule 1 of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (2015) requires each public body to publish annual reports on progress made in satisfying wellbeing objectives.

- 7.4 Chair thanked AJ for the detailed report provided to Members. The Chair queried if there was any data relating to the Safe-call section and if we knew how many people have contacted us.
- 7.5 AJ advised we can look into reporting on this and providing this data in future meetings.

7.6 RESOLVED to:

- i) Members noted the contents of the Annual Performance Assessment for the period of 2023/24.**
- ii) Members approved the Annual Performance Assessment 2023/24 for publication on the Fire and Rescue Authority's website.**

8.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT Q1 2024-25

- 8.1 Area Manager Anthony Jones delivered the Performance Monitoring report for Q1 period. Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to provide comparative data relating to the Fire and Rescue Authority's 'Our 5 Principles for keeping communities safe' for the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year. The report also contains commentary on activity and proposed activity associated with the principles.
- 8.2 The report highlights emerging trends in both increased, reduced and new demands. In addition, the report underpins the development of new or revised activity to mitigate increasing or emergent demand and risk.
- 8.3 Cllr GS queried if we compare our absenteeism and sickness rates with other UK Authorities. Sickness rates could be affected by the changes we have recently gone through.
- 8.4 AJ advised the comparisons drawn were specific to Wales during this stage.
- 8.5 Further questions emerged on measures being undertaken to reduce sickness in the coming months.
- 8.6 It was highlighted that our statistics in relation to bugs and norovirus are in line with All Wales figures and that we continue to monitor this in consequent quarters whilst providing robust packages.

8.7 ACFO MacArthur advised on the person-centred approach applied to each case of sickness, this approach is monitored by various attendance groups, occupational health management support, employee assistance programme and dedicated mental health support. We offer return to work opportunities where possible including the option of a different department until a full return to work is possible.

8.8 The Chair highlighted this report as new to Members who had requested this information and looked forward to seeing the results of Q2.

8.9 RESOLVED to:

- i) Members noted the contents of the performance monitoring report.**

9.0 URGENT MATTERS

9.1 There were no urgent matters to report.

Meeting closed: 14:49 hrs