

**NORTH WALES FIRE AUTHORITY**

These are the minutes of the meeting of North Wales Fire Authority held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2005 at the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold. Meeting commenced at 10:30am

**Present:**

Councillor

Representing

T Roberts (Chairman)  
M Williams (Vice-Chairman)

Gwynedd Council  
Wrexham County Borough Council

W E Jones  
R D Peacock  
J M Vaughan  
G C Evans  
S Frobisher  
J A Smith  
J B Attridge (substitute)  
D Clayton  
E F Evans  
R G Hampson  
J Ovens  
C Shone  
M Griffith  
W T Owen  
G O Williams  
E C George  
N S Colbourne  
G M Craddock  
P M Shone  
W J Chorlton  
J A Roberts  
W T Roberts

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

**Also present:**

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); I R Miller (Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority); K W Finch (Treasurer to the Authority); C Enness (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); C Hanks (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Service Support); P S Claydon (Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Service Delivery); P L Slee (Assistant Chief Officer, Corporate Services), W A Murphy (Senior Operations Manager); S Morris (Projects Officer) and Rh Evans (Member Liaison Officer).

## **PART I**

### **1) Apologies**

#### Councillor

P C Evans JP  
S C Jones  
D Jones MBE  
D Barratt  
E Morgan Jones

#### Representing

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

### **2) Notice of Urgent Matters**

The Chairman advised that no items had been submitted to either the Clerk or him for consideration.

### **3) Chairman's Announcements**

- i. The Authority's condolences were conveyed to Councillor W J Chorlton on the recent loss of his father and to Councillor D Clayton whose mother had recently passed away.
- ii. Members who had not submitted bank/building society account details to the Authority in order to facilitate the payments of their allowances and expenses were requested to forward them to the Member Liaison Officer as soon as possible.
- iii. Future committee meetings: the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Working Group would meet at 10:30 am on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2005. Immediately following the Group's meeting, at approximately 12 noon, the Executive Panel would hold its next meeting. These meetings were to be held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Rhyl. The next meeting of the Fire Authority would be held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2005 at Bodlondeb, Conwy. The Authority's Annual Meeting would commence at 10:30am followed immediately by its usual business meeting.

### **4) Minutes**

The following minutes were submitted:

- i. Fire Authority meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2004

**Resolved: - to approve the minutes as a true and correct record of proceedings**

The following minutes were submitted for information purposes:

- ii. Best Value committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2004
- iii. Standards Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2004
- iv. Executive Panel meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2005

## 5) Matters Arising

The following matters arose from the minutes submitted:

### **Fire Authority Minutes 20<sup>th</sup> December 2004:**

**Page 2, Notice of Urgent Matters:** The Chief Fire Officer requested the Members' agreement to bring forward the proposed visit by new members to Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's International Training Centre at Chorley from the summer of 2005 to the spring of 2005. The reason for this being that the Authority currently had twelve new recruits undergoing their initial training course at the Centre. He was therefore of the view that it would be an opportune time for members to visit the Centre when the recruits were nearing the completion of their training course. It was:

***Resolved:* - that the fact finding visit for new members to Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's International Training Centre at Chorley be brought forward to the spring of 2005**

**Page 5, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph - Chairman's visits to neighbouring and cross-border fire and rescue authorities:** The Chairman informed members that arrangements were now in hand for the new Chief Fire Officer of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, along with other senior managers and authority representatives, to visit North Wales in the near future. It was also the Chairman's intention to arrange a similar visit to Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

**Page 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph - Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) fire and rescue arrangements:** Councillor E C George advised that the WLGA had recently suggested that it was willing to consider, now that fire and rescue had become a devolved matter, establishing a committee specifically to deal with fire and rescue service issues, similar to the Local Government Association's (LGA) Fire Forum. Councillor George was of the view that proper consultation should take place with all fire and rescue authorities prior to the establishment of such a committee. The Chairman undertook to raise the matter at the next meeting of the WLGA Co-ordinating Committee but advised that the LGA was also looking at the possibility of re-establishing its LGA Fire Executive Committee, although there would be no guarantee that Welsh fire and rescue authorities would have a seat on any new LGA Fire Executive. Councillor George was of the view that, following devolution, seats on LGA fire committees were no longer as important as they had been in the past. The Authority should now be lobbying the WLGA to set up its own committees which mirrored the ones established by the LGA in England. The Chief Fire Officer advised that the reason why the LGA was currently looking at re-establishing its Fire Executive was because of the findings of a scrutiny committee report on the way the industrial

dispute had been handled and the lessons to be learnt for the future. One criticism levelled at the LGA was its decision to do away with the Fire Executive. Members were reminded by the Chief Fire Officer that under the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales a Fire and Rescue Liaison Group would be established. This Group, the membership of which would include the Chief Fire Officers and Chairs of all Welsh fire and rescue authorities and the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, would meet on a regular basis, with a minimum requirement of two meetings to be held per year. It was:

***Resolved: - that a letter be sent to the WLGA requesting that, in response to the devolution of responsibility for the fire and rescue services in Wales to the National Assembly, it establishes its own Fire Forum/Executive mirroring that established by the LGA in England***

#### **Standards Committee Minutes, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2004**

Councillor W J Chorlton said that, from reading the minutes of this Committee, he gained the impression that the Committee was concerned that it had not received any cases for investigation and, as a result, it may therefore be looking for cases to investigate. The Clerk reassured Councillor Chorlton that this was not the case and referred him to the final sentence of paragraph 5 of the Standards Committee's Annual Report, business item number 12 on the current meeting's agenda, which stated that "the committee hopes that this pleasing position will continue".

Councillor W J Chorlton referred to a phone call that he had from the Clerk following a point he had raised at the Executive Panel on 7 March. His comments had not been intended to be disrespectful but had been so interpreted by the Chief Fire Officer, for which he had apologised. Councillor Chorlton was informed by the Clerk and Chairman that he could not raise an issue relating to the business of the Executive Panel's meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005 at the current meeting as the minutes of that particular meeting had not been submitted for approval or for information.

#### **6) Chairman's Report**

The Chairman introduced his report (distributed at the meeting) which provided members with a brief update on the meetings and events attended by him, in his capacity as Chairman, since the Fire Authority's last meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2004. He then proceeded to detail the events and the activities, listed in his report and answered members' questions on various aspects of the information presented. The Authority was informed by the Chairman that both the meetings attended by him, the Chairmen and Chief Fire Officers of the all the Welsh fire and rescue authorities with Mrs Edwina Hart AM, the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, had been organised to discuss, amongst other issues, the authorities' concerns regarding the revised version of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales. Members were advised that a subsequent meeting held between the Chairs and Chief Fire Officers with the Leader and

Director of the WLGA had been both interesting and constructive. As a result the Leader of the WLGA, Councillor Alex Aldridge, had written to the Minister to raise a number of the fire and rescue authorities' concerns with her. The National Framework had since been presented and approved by the Assembly's plenary session on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

Members were given a brief overview of the "Performance Management" Conference, in London, which the Chairman had attended with the Projects Officer on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

The Chairman thanked all who had been involved with the successful Young Firefighters' Association (YFA) passing out parade in Holyhead on the 26<sup>th</sup> February and with the launch of the new YFA Branch at Barmouth on 19<sup>th</sup> March. He wished both branches every success for the future.

Members were informed that the LGA Fire Conference, held in Portsmouth between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February, had been an excellent event. They were also informed by the Chairman that a meeting of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire Brigades, which was postponed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, had been re-arranged for the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

The Chairman also advised the Authority that Atal Tan Cymru had successfully appointed a new Communications Manager on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2005. The person appointed would be taking up post shortly. Members:

**Resolved: - to note the information contained in the report**

## **7) Provisional Outturn 2004/05**

The Treasurer introduced his report (previously circulated) which detailed the estimated provisional outturn for the 2004/05 financial year. Current indications estimated an underspend of approximately £839,364. The Authority was reminded by the Treasurer that it had already taken a decision at its December 2004 meeting to utilise £500,000 of the underspend to fund budget increases for 2005/06. Due to manufacturing problems with the new uniform not all of the items would be delivered before the end of the current financial year, as a result the Authority would incur an underspend on its uniform provision for the 2004/05 year. Therefore, the Treasurer advised that the Authority should establish a Provision for Uniforms within its 2005/06 budget and transfer the sum of £95,000 from the 2004/05 underspend to this Provision in order to fund these costs. The estimated balance of the 2004/05 underspend would then stand, dependent on no major operational incidents occurring before the end of the financial year, at approximately £240,000. Members were advised by the Treasurer that they needed to take a view on how best to deal with this underspend. Since the writing of the report another potential issue had come to light which may have a bearing on the Capital Programme for 2005/06. Members were advised by the Treasurer that they would not be able to share any detailed information on this

issue with them without taking the meeting into Part II business. The Treasurer stressed that at present the matter was only an issue which may potentially have an effect on the Capital Programme for 2005/06. Further enquires were currently underway in order to clarify the exact position. It was the Treasurer's view that the Authority should consider amending the wording of the third clause of the recommendation so that it could retain the underspend from 2004/05 for the purpose of establishing a provision to fund this potential issue, in addition to funding projects which were a result of decisions on the IRMP, and that a progress report to be submitted to the Authority's June meeting.

Councillor W J Chorlton informed the Fire Authority that his own constituent authority had indicated that it expected him, as one of its representatives on the Authority, to request that its share of the balance of the underspend be refunded. On the other hand, Councillor E C George advised that Wrexham County Borough Council was pleased with the contribution the Fire Authority had requested from it for the next financial year and he was therefore of the view that the Fire Authority should retain the balance of the underspend as a provision, at least until June when the situation may well be clearer. Councillor E F Evans agreed with Councillor George that the amount that would be returned to each constituent authority would not have a huge impact on any of the authorities' budgets. In reply to a question from Councillor W J Chorlton on the Fire Authority's legal position on the matter, the Clerk advised that the Authority could not return the money to one constituent authority without returning it to the others. If the Authority decided to refund the balance of the underspend, it would have to be refunded to each authority based on the formula detailed in the Treasurer's report. Members were reminded by the Clerk that, although they had been nominated by their respective constituent authorities to serve as their representatives on the Fire Authority, their first and foremost duty as members of the Fire Authority was to reach decisions for the benefit of the inhabitants of North Wales in relation to fire authority business. He understood that members, naturally, had to consider their own authority's viewpoint but stressed that this could not be allowed to fetter their discretion. The Treasurer added that the constituent authorities, if they so wished, could request that the balance be returned, but the Fire Authority could also retain it for specific reasons, as was the recommendation in this case, so long as it regularly reported back on the situation to members. Both the Clerk and Treasurer confirmed that the Fire Authority was not permitted to hold balances at the end of a financial year, but it could hold provisions. The North Wales Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1995 was silent on this issue, but it did specify that the Authority could, at any time, refund monies to the constituent authorities and also request additional funding if it so required.

Councillor M Griffith asked whether the Authority could, once it had taken a decision to establish a provision for a specific reason, transfer the money it held in that provision towards some other project or cost. The Clerk advised that this was permitted; it was also possible, if it transpired at a later date that the

provision was not required, for the money to be returned to the constituent authorities.

Councillor W J Chorlton was of the view that, on a point of principle, the balance of the underspend should be returned to the constituent authorities. The Treasurer confirmed to the Authority that he maintained regular contact with all North Wales local authority treasurers and updated them on the Fire Authority's financial position, but emphasised that the potential issue relating to the Fire Authority's capital programme had not come to light the last time he had spoken to the Treasurer of Anglesey County Council. Councillor E C George was of the view that there was no need for the Fire Authority to consult the constituent authorities on this matter. When the UK Government had provided the Authority with transitional funding to assist with the modernisation agenda the Authority had not refunded each constituent authority with their share of the amount received, therefore the same principle should be applied to the balance of the underspend for the 2004/05 financial year.

Councillor E C George proposed the acceptance of recommendation 9(i) as detailed in the Treasurer's report, along with recommendation 9(iii) amended to read: that any underspend in 2004/05, above £595,000 be used to establish a provision to fund an issue that may arise in relation to the capital programme for 2005/06 and to fund projects which are a result of decisions taken on the IRMP; and that a report be submitted to the Fire Authority meeting in June 2005 on the utilisation of the underspend from 2004/05 which was earmarked as provision for a capital programme issue and for funding decisions taken on the IRMP. This proposal was seconded by Councillor E F Evans.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor W J Chorlton, seconded by Councillor J A Roberts, that recommendations 9(i) and 9(ii) as detailed in the Treasurer's report be approved. The amendment was put the vote first, and on being voted upon was, by a majority, lost. Subsequently the original recommendations were put to the vote, and by a majority it was:

**Resolved:** -

- i. that £95,000 be set aside from the underspend in 2004/05 to create a Provision for Uniforms;***
- ii. that the remainder of the underspend in 2004/05, above £595,000 be used to establish a provision to fund an issue that may arise in relation to the capital programme for 2005/06 and to fund projects which are a result of decisions taken on the IRMP; and that a report be submitted to the Fire Authority meeting in June 2005 on the utilisation of the underspend from 2004/05 which was earmarked as provision for a capital programme issue and for funding decisions taken on the IRMP***

Councillor W J Chorlton, J A Roberts and W T Roberts requested that it be recorded in the minutes that they had voted against the approved resolution.

## **8) Integrated Risk Management Plan – Second Year Action Plan**

The Chief Fire Officer introduced his report (previously circulated) informing members of the responses received to the consultation on “Your Service, Your Safety, Your Voice”, the Authority’s draft Integrated Risk Management (IRMP) 2<sup>nd</sup> year action plan. Members were informed by the Chief Fire Officer that, in accordance with the guidance issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Authority had not re-written its IRMP but rather had updated its first year action plan. A total of three responses had been received to the consultation, two from representative bodies and one from a member of staff. A table listing all the comments and issues raised by the respondents was annexed to the report. Members were advised that once the Action Plan had received the Authority’s approval it would, along with the list of responses, be posted on to the Authority’s website for public information purposes.

Councillor W J Chorlton pointed out that one of the respondents had raised the issue that the Authority had not set any response times and that the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration had, during the plenary debate on the National Framework the previous week, indicated that she was still looking at this issue. In reply to this point the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that, during the IRMP process the Authority had decided against setting specific time standards. This now seemed to have been a very prudent approach as the Assembly Government had included in the National Framework its intention to publish, during 2005, guidance on Service Delivery Standards.

Members were advised that the issue of co-responding was now being debated on a UK wide basis through the NJC. Further information on this issue would be available later in the year.

Councillor J Vaughan enquired as to why the Retained Firefighters’ Union (RFU) wanted to be privy to discussions relating to the Fire Service Control room when the RFU had no members working in the Control Room; the Chief Fire Officer advised that the RFU was the only body who could answer her query. It was:

### **Resolved: -**

- i. to note the contents of the report and the attached table;***
- ii. to agree the responses on the attached table; and***
- iii. to adopt the 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Action Plan***

## **9) Integrated Risk Management Plan**

By way of a presentation from Assistant Chief Fire Officer Paul Claydon, members were given a progress report on the Fire Authority’s first year IRMP action plan. He gave a brief overview of the objectives of the IRMP process, the consultation that had taken place on the first year’s action plan, the proposed actions in



each of the eight risk areas before proceeding to inform members of the progress attained to date in each of these areas. The achievements included:

Risk 1: People Continue to Die in Fires - the Authority had recorded its lowest number of fire deaths since its formation in 1996 during 2004. It was also on target to see a reduction in the number of fires by 25%. A new management structure had been introduced, retained personnel were now undertaking community fire safety work and non-operational personnel were now also being employed in this field.

Risk 2: "Out of sight, out of mind" - the Service was now operating partnership schemes at fire stations with organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). A new organisational structure based on unitary authority areas had been established as a means to facilitate closer working relationships between the Service and each local authority as well as voluntary organisations. To assist with the new organisational structure, new office accommodation had been secured in some areas, whilst in other areas the current premises had been adapted or refurbished to meet the required needs. New YFA units had been established in a number of areas and Atal Tân Cymru, which received financial support from the Authority, was now having an impact across Wales.

Risk 3: Repeated False Alarms – due to the introduction of new procedures to deal with repeated false alarms the Authority had successfully reduced by 440 the number of appliance movements generated by these types of calls. 8.2% of the calls received had not been attended whilst a reduced attendance had been mobilised to 8.1% of the calls received. On average the Service received approximately 247 false alarm calls per month. Although the Authority's robust policy in this area was paying dividends it would have to be withdrawn in favour of a policy, developed and adopted nationally, by the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), as this policy had received the support of the Association of British Insurers.

Risk 4: Standards of Fire Cover – Since the withdrawal of the national standards of fire cover and the Authority's undertaking to respond "to fire and other emergencies...by the quickest means possible, using the most appropriate resources..." there had been no decline in responding times. Call handling was continually monitored and any anomalies that did occur were investigated in case there were any local issues that caused a delay in responding.

Risk 5: Working Days and Busy Times – the start and finish times of shifts at day crewed stations had been changed, with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> January 2005, to align them with the busiest call out times. This change, which seemed to be working well at present, was continually being monitored for effectiveness.

Risk 6: "Have we got the balance right?" – to date reviews had been undertaken on pre-determined attendance, special appliances – the results of which should be available in the near future, street mobilising instead of the

current parish mobilising system, equipment placement and New Dimensions. As a result, new systems of call management had been introduced with a view to combating the number of hoax and suspicious calls. Performance monitoring was also being undertaken at all levels.

Risk 7: Arson an Increasing Menace – an Arson Reduction Team had recently been established in North Wales. The Team was a joint working initiative between the Fire and Rescue Service and the Police with the aim of reducing arson and arson related crime in the area. The Authority was also working in partnership with other agencies and authorities in the area with a view to reducing the number of arson incidents. As a result, the Authority had seen the number of deliberate primary fires reduce by approximately 20 per month whilst secondary fires were showing a 33% reduction on the previous year's figure.

Risk 8: Organisational Structure - a new organisational structure had been introduced which focused on local needs. The old divisional areas had been dismantled and replaced by county areas based on local authority boundaries, with the exception of Gwynedd which had been split into two areas; each of these areas had a dedicated county safety manager. Fire stations were also currently involved with trialling the IPDS system.

Research work was continuing on the "Areas for further Exploration" but Assistant Chief Fire Officer Claydon advised that the Control Room issue had been progressed and that the Authority was looking towards moving to a co-located emergency services control room facility within the next twelve months.

Following the presentation members were given an opportunity to ask questions. In reply to a question from Councillor W J Chorlton on whether any problems had come to light following the introduction of the new shift times on day crewed stations, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Claydon advised that, since the introduction of the new system, a number of individuals who had originally submitted transfer requests had since withdrawn those requests. Councillor Chorlton commented that he was hearing a different story and requested that a survey be undertaken. The Chief Fire Officer advised that he had already undertaken to review the situation after six months; all parties concerned would be given the opportunity to respond to the review. He confirmed that the information received to date indicated that the new duty shift system, which had received the Authority's support, seemed to be working well. Councillor E C George requested that the outcome of the review be reported to the Authority. The Chief Fire Officer agreed to this request and it was:

***Resolved:* - to note the progress made to date on the Authority's IRMP first year action plan and that a report be submitted to the Authority's meeting in September 2005 on the outcome of the review undertaken into the operation of the new shift times on day crewed stations.**

The Chairman thanked Assistant Chief Fire Officer Claydon for his presentation.

## **10) Fighting Fires at or under the sea**

The Chief Fire Officer introduced his report (previously circulated) briefing members on the current and proposed positions regarding the Service's commitment to attending incidents at sea. He explained that the report had been submitted mainly for information purposes as it highlighted an area of the Authority's work that did not receive a lot of publicity. Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 responding to incidents at or under the sea had become a statutory duty, therefore the Authority was required to provide this service or, alternatively, to enter into a reinforcement scheme with another fire and rescue authority to provide the service on its behalf. The existence of the port of Holyhead was one of the main reasons why North Wales Fire Authority was one of a number of authorities which already provided the service. As North Wales Fire Authority had, for some considerable time, declared itself an asset to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for the provision of the service, it could be called upon to respond to incidents at, or under, the sea along a large area of the western coast of the UK, stretching from Mid and West Wales to Strathclyde. The latter two authorities along with North Wales Fire Authority were also members of the Maritime Incident Response Group (MIRG), a group of fifteen fire and rescue authorities strategically located around the UK coast that could be called upon to respond to maritime incidents.

Councillor W J Chorlton said he wholeheartedly supported the Authority's participation in firefighting at sea but expressed his concern about the amount of insurance cover for personnel who undertook these extremely dangerous duties. The Chief Fire Officer advised that all such issues would be covered by the MIRG Terms and Conditions Agreement when finalised.

The Clerk informed members that, although the 2004 Act explicitly stated that an authority was required to provide the service, the Assembly was yet to consult on an order to charge for the provision of specific services under Section 19 of the Act; this may be an obstacle in the way of the cost recovery process from the MCA if the Service was mobilised to an incident at or under the sea. It was therefore imperative that the Authority exerted pressure on the Assembly to expedite an order under Section 19. Councillor D Clayton agreed with the Clerk's view on the importance of making strong representations to the Assembly on the need to bring forward an order under Section 19. He also enquired as to who was responsible for determining, under Section 20 of the 2004 Act, which authorities provided the Service and why all authorities did not provide this service. In reply to Councillor Clayton's questions the Chief Fire Officer advised that, prior to the 2004 Act, not all coastal fire authorities took responsibility for firefighting at sea. Neither would it now be feasible for all fire and rescue authorities to undertake to provide the service as this would result in an overprovision and be a waste of resources. It would be far more efficient for authorities which currently did not possess these resources to enter into reinforcement schemes with MIRG members. Mr W A Murphy, the Service's Senior Operations Manager, advised members that both Lancashire and

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authorities had recently approached North Wales Fire and Rescue Service with a view to entering into reinforcement schemes for the provision of the service to those authorities; no agreements had yet been signed. On this point and in relation to entering into mutual reinforcement schemes with authorities outside its own area, the Clerk advised that Section 9 of the 2004 Act was quite explicit about the Assembly's power to confer by order an authority to discharge its functions outside its own geographical area. He was therefore of the view that it would be advisable for the Authority to make representations to the Assembly Government to also bring forward an order under Section 9 of the Act. Members agreed with this view and:

**Resolved: - to –**

- i. note the contents of the report;***
- ii. support, in principle, the Service's proposed membership of the Maritime Incident Response Group, subject to receiving and considering the MIRG Terms and Conditions Agreement when finalised; and***
- iii. that representations be made to the Welsh Assembly Government to expedite orders under Sections 9 and 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004***

**11) Revised Terms of Reference for North Wales Fire Authority's Executive Panel**

The Clerk introduced his report (previously circulated) with a view to seeking the Authority to agree amendments to the terms of reference of the Executive Panel in the light of legislative changes and the discipline, capability and grievance procedures that came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2005. Members:

**Resolved: - to amend the Fire Authority's Executive Panel's terms of reference as set out in the recommendation in the report**

**12) Annual Report of North Wales Fire Authority's Standards Committee**

The Clerk introduced his report (previously circulated) requesting the Authority to consider the Standards Committee's annual report, a copy of which was annexed to the report. He explained that the report was primarily for information purposes and that the Standards Committee was of the view that the presentation of an annual report to the Authority constituted good corporate governance on the Committee's behalf. Members:

**Resolved: - to note the contents of the report**

**13) Young Firefighters' Association**

The Chief Fire Officer introduced his report (previously circulated) which gave members an update on the progress which had been made in establishing the Young Firefighters' Association (YFA) in North Wales. The report contained all the

background information, details of the current situation and the future considerations for the YFA in North Wales.

In reply to members questions the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that, although Rhyl had been the founding branch for the movement in North Wales, the branch was not currently operational. The YFA organisation was dependent on Service personnel giving up their own time to establish and run branches, therefore if the individual in charge was promoted and moved elsewhere, as was the case with the Rhyl branch, there was a danger that a branch could fold if no one else was willing to assume responsibility for it. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that, although the work with the YFA was undertaken on a voluntary basis, any expenses incurred by the individuals concerned with the running of the branch were reimbursed. Councillor E C George wondered whether local authority youth services' departments could, in any way, assist the Fire Authority with the YFA movement. In reply to a question from Councillor S Frobisher on whether the fact that an individual had been a YFA cadet assisted them in any way to join the Service at a later date, the Chief Fire Officer advised that the movement was in no way intended as a fast-track system for a career in the Service; YFA cadets finished at the age of 16 and the minimum age for recruitment into the Service was 18. The whole concept of the YFA movement was to engage youngsters and develop them into responsible citizens within their own communities. During the YFA passing out parade at Holyhead a local teacher had commented to the Chairman that there had been a positive change in the attitudes of the youngsters involved with that particular branch. Members were advised that the YFA branches operated under the umbrella of the Fire Services' Youth Training Association (FSYTA). There was no set method for securing funding, each branch was responsible for securing its own sponsorship money and funding, this mainly came from various local companies and individuals within their own communities. Members were advised by the Chairman that it was his intention to set up a meeting with the YFA Co-ordinators in North Wales for the purpose of a "brainstorming session" with a view to arranging a "Chair's Competition" which would enable inter-branch competitions to be held. He undertook to report the result of his meeting with the co-ordinators back to the Authority at its June meeting. It was:

***Resolved: - to note the contents of the report and that the Chairman report the outcome of his meeting with the YFA Co-ordinators on his proposal to arrange a "Chair's Competition" for YFA branches to the Fire Authority's meeting in June***

#### **14) "Informative"**

The Chief Fire Officer presented the current issue of the 'Informative' magazine to members. Congratulations were extended by the Chairman to the Service's Press and Public Relations Officer, Bethan Davies, on the publication. Members:

***Resolved: - to accept the publication***

**15) Urgent Matters**

No items had been submitted for consideration.

**PART II**

No business.

The formal business meeting concluded at 12.10pm.

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

**Signed:** T Roberts

**Dated:** 20 June, 2005

**Note:**

Following lunch members proceeded to Mold Fire Station to view one of the Authority's Incident Response Units (IRUs).

**16) Viewing of Incident Response Unit at Mold Fire Station**

On arrival at Mold Fire Station members were given a briefing by the New Dimensions Group Manager, Russell Vaughan, on the Incident Response Unit. He explained that the units, two of which were located in North Wales, had been supplied and financed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 terrorist attack in New York. Their main purpose would be to deal with any decontamination work required in the aftermath of a terrorist attack, but they could also be used for decontamination work required in the event of a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, or Nuclear (CBRN) accident. Members were shown the various kit items which each unit carried before being given the opportunity to see and walk through the decontamination tents which had been erected in the station yard. Both Russell Vaughan and Kevin Brain, New Dimensions Group Trainer, gave members a comprehensive overview of the procedure that would be followed, in conjunction with the other emergency services, in the event of a decontamination incident. They also provided members with information on the uses for the different pieces of equipment on show and both they and the other Service personnel present answered members' questions accordingly.