

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE PANEL

Minutes of the **Executive Panel** of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 17 June 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
Lisa Allington

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 18 MARCH 2024

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 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 The Chair asked if there was an update around paragraph 5.2 in relation to sickness absence whereby Audit Wales were going to be asked to provide sickness data across all three FRS in Wales. The DCFO confirmed that this information was actually provided annually by the Welsh government and the next update was due in October 2024. This would then be provided to Members for scrutiny.

5.2 Paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4 in connection with RDS availability, DCFO Forshaw highlighted that this data was now within the Performance Monitoring Report which was included on the agenda for today's meeting.

5.3 In respect to item 5.1, the Treasurer confirmed that he had spoken with Civil Servants in the Welsh Government and was expecting information on the Pensions Grant. With the election ongoing it was unlikely that a response would now be received until a new UK Government had been formed and the final figure agreed. It was expected that there would be a grant but the amount was as yet unknown. A residual financial risk remains but the approach taken during the budget setting process had minimised this risk.

6.0 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN WALES

6.1 CFO Docx presented the paper on the Governance Arrangements for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales and highlighted recent communication to council leaders from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for fire. The paper also confirmed the recent publication of the Senedd's Equality and Social Justice Scrutiny Committee, "Sound the Alarm: Governance of Fire and Rescue Services", which considered the sector's governance arrangements.

- 6.2 These documents highlighted to Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) the work being undertaken to consider issues relevant to the governance arrangements around the fire sector in Wales.
- 6.3 One Member confirmed that they had attended a meeting with Council Leaders in relation to this matter and that it was expected that information would be shared in due course.
- 6.4 Some concern was expressed that the decision in Cardiff had been driven by the situation in the South, and that some of the ideas expressed by the Minister were not tenable. It was also felt that there would be little time for a Cabinet member to be able to sit on the Authority and that the proposed membership would need much more thought in order to make it work.
- 6.5 The Treasurer noted that further to his experience of sitting in Council Cabinets and in National Park Authority meetings, as well as being involved in the Fire Authority, he was concerned about some suggestions in the national papers on Governance. He felt that the idea that CFOs could be generalists without FRS experience may reduce cost-effectiveness and that Council Cabinet members were busy with a portfolio, and would not be able to prioritise FRA duties.
- 6.6 He further stated that a precept would be a more transparent means of funding FRAs, provided that the majority of members were constituent LA councillors.
- 6.7 The CFO advised that the opinion of the Audit Committee had been that there should remain representation by the Local Authorities to ensure continued accountability at a local level.

6.8 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the work initiated by the Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning with the South Wales Local Authorities; and**
- ii) note the second part of the report published by the Equality and Social Justice Committee's report setting out their opinions for change to the governance arrangements for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales.**

7.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 23-24

- 7.1 Area Manager Anthony Jones presented the Performance Monitoring Report for the financial year 2023-24 which provided information about incident activity during 2023/24 financial year, performance in relation to the Authority's improvement and well-being objectives, and other notable incident activity.

- 7.2 The Chair stated that it was pleasing to note the reduction in domestic dwelling fires.
- 7.3 One Member asked what kind of relationship North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) had with other partner agencies in connection with weather related emergencies. The CFO confirmed that the Service enjoyed a very good working relationship with Natural Resources Wales, along with other key partners, and response to these events was collaborative.
- 7.4 AM Jones advised Members that the Service also had representation on the all-Wales Wildfire board.
- 7.5 One Member asked if there were any plans to begin to install stove guards as a preventative measure and the CFO confirmed that the Service were already involved in the pilot which was proving to be very effective. However, plans to roll this out wider had not yet been finalised.

7.6 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the content of the performance monitoring report.**

8.0 EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW PROGRESS REPORT

- 8.1 DCFO Forshaw delivered the Summary Report on the Emergency Cover Review Task and Finish Group. This report gave Members an update on the progress made by the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) Task and Finish Group, established in response to the decision made by the Authority at its meeting on 18 December 2023, to develop a new permanent option for the provision of emergency cover across North Wales.
- 8.2 The Chair took the opportunity to thank all those involved in the Task and Finish Group for all of their hard work to date in looking for a viable solution.

8.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the engagement and efforts of all stakeholders on the ECR Task and Finish Group to work together to develop options for improvements to the provision of fair and equitable emergency cover across North Wales; and**
- ii) note the progress made by both the ECR Task and Finish Group and the Authority ECR Working Group to develop a new permanent option for the provision of emergency cover across North Wales.**

9.0 THE CHARTER FOR FAMILIES BEREAVED THROUGH PUBLIC TRAGEDY

- 9.1 ACFO Evans introduced the Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy paper which set out for Members of the Authority the

background, details and requirements of the Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy (the Charter).

- 9.2 The Chair noted that he welcomed the introduction of this Charter and that he felt it would be hugely beneficial.

9.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) endorse the ratification of The Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy at a future full Authority meeting, under the following terms:**
 - the Chair of the Authority signs the Charter on behalf of the Authority;**
 - the Chief Fire Officer signs the Charter on behalf of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service); and**
 - that due regard be given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) during implementation and adoption of the Charter.**

10 REPORT ON 2021-22 DECARBONISATION REVIEW

- 10.1 ACFO Evans summarised the paper on the 2021-22 Decarbonisation Review which reported on progress towards enacting the recommendations of the Audit Wales report 'Carbon Emissions Reduction – North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority' dated March 2022.
- 10.2 A Member asked for thanks to be passed on to those officers involved in the organisation and delivery of the Sustainability Working Group. It had been easy to engage with and contribute to and had been extremely worthwhile.

10.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) note actions taken to date; and**
- ii) present recommendations for detailed decarbonisation policies to the Executive Panel over the coming year**

11.0 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT

- 11.1 AM Jones delivered the Strategic Risk Management paper which provided Members with an update on the content of the Authority's strategic risk register in accordance with the Strategic Risk Management Policy.
- 11.2 The Chair asked Members to note that this register was reviewed regularly by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority.

11.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the identified strategic risks that are facing the Authority following the end of year review.**

12.0 URGENT MATTERS

- 12.1 There were no urgent matters to raise.

Meeting closed: 14:49 hrs