

**NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE PANEL**

Minutes of the Executive Panel Meeting of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on 8 February 2016 at Fire and Rescue Headquarters, St Asaph. Meeting commenced at 10am.

PRESENT

Cllr M LI Davies (Chair)	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr B Dunn	Flintshire County Council
Cllr R O Jones	Anglesey County Council
Cllr P R Lewis	Conwy County Borough Council
Cllr G Lowe	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr H McGuill	Flintshire County Council
Cllr W R Owen	Gwynedd Council
Cllr W T Owen	Gwynedd Council
Cllr A Tansley	Conwy County Borough Council

ALSO PRESENT:

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); C Everett (Clerk and Monitoring Officer); D Docx (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); R Fairhead and R Simmons (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); G W Griffiths (Training and Development Manager); G Brandrick (Professional and Service Standards Manager); K Roberts (Senior Operations Manager); S Millington (Senior Fire Safety Manager); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer).

APOLOGIES

Cllr L W Davies	Anglesey County Council
Cllr R Davies	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr T A Edwards	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr P W Owen	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr R E Parry	Conwy County Borough Council

At the start of the meeting, the Chair read out a message from Cllr L W Davies, Anglesey County Council who was unable to attend the meeting. The message conveyed the appreciation and gratitude of Cllr Davies, the Beaumaris Town Council and Llangoed Community Council for the work carried out by the firefighters in pumping water from houses and the castle at Beaumaris during the large flooding incidents in December. The Councillor expressed his thanks to all those who worked through the night to safeguard homes and the community.

All members reiterated Cllr Davies' sentiments and it was agreed that the message would be posted on the Service intranet for all staff to see.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

1.1 None

- 2 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS
 - 2.1 None
- 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2015
 - 3.1 The minutes of the last meeting were submitted for approval.
 - 3.2 **RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true and correct record.**
- 4 MATTERS ARISING
 - 4.1 9.3 – A recommendation from the annual improvement report was to have a medium term financial plan in place and this had been agreed at the extraordinary meeting.
 - 4.2 Fire and Rescue Authority Budget 2015-16 Supporting Projects – a report will be provided to Members, after it has been in place for over 18 months, on the outcome of the changes implemented on 1 April 2015.
- 5 PERFORMANCE MONITORING
 - 5.1 The report provided Members with information relating to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service activity and monitoring performance against the improvement objectives.
 - 5.2 Following a request from Cllr McGuill at the last meeting, a breakdown of the causes/ignition sources of accidental dwelling fires was tabled at the meeting; although 'cooking appliance' is recorded as the source of 46% of all accidental dwelling fires, it was noteworthy that the appliance was faulty in very few cases and that it was actually the person using the appliance that caused the fire in the vast majority of incidents.
 - 5.3 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer led Members through the report, which covered the period April to December 2015, and highlighted the following:
 - 5.4 The performance information relating to improvement objective 1: preventing deaths and injuries from accidental dwelling fires showed a decrease in performance against all performance indicators under this objective compared to the same period in 2014/15 which had been an exceptionally 'good' year in terms of performance. However, Members were asked to note that based on the average over the last three years, there had been an improvement in performance; for example, in terms of accidental fires in dwellings, there were two more incidents recorded in 2015/16 than in the same period in 2014/15 but compared to the average for the three previous years there had been a 10.5% reduction.
 - 5.5 Since 2010/11, there had been a welcome, year on year, reduction in the percentage of dwellings experiencing a fire but which had no smoke alarm, however, there had been a slight increase from 40 to 48 incidents in 2015/16 compared to the same period in 2014/15. It was noted that 16,868 home safety checks had been completed between April and December 2015, and

is therefore likely to meet the annual 20,000 target set by the Authority; Members queried the fact that referrals from partner organisations had decreased compared to the previous year. The DCFO confirmed that officers are in the process of reviewing and refreshing memorandums of understanding with partner organisations; it is anticipated that this will be a reminder to cascade the good practice down to all staff and practitioners and serve as a reminder of the importance of making HSC referrals.

- 5.6 In terms of performance information relating to all activity, overall there had been a decrease of 21.9% or 1,057 fewer incidents compared with the same period in 2014/15. However, there had been an increase in special service calls due to the increase in flooding incidents which offset the downward trend in attendances at road traffic collisions. Members expressed concern at the significant increase in the number of attendances at flooding incidents but with no additional funding forthcoming from the Welsh Government; it was noted that FRS attendance at flooding incidents continues to be a non-statutory duty.
- 5.7 It was pleasing to note that there had been a significant reduction of 78% in the number of false alarms from automatic fire alarms in non-domestic properties since the Authority implemented a change in policy as of 1 April 2015.
- 5.8 The reduction in fires in the first three quarters of 2015/16 compared with 2014/15 is also reflected both in accidental and deliberate fires with a reduction of 6.4% and 1.8% respectively. There had also been a decrease of 14 fewer fires in non-domestic premises compared with the same period in 2014/15.
- 5.9 **RESOLVED to note the performance monitoring report and the addendum information tabled at the meeting.**

6 SERVICE ACTIVITY DURING RECENT FLOODING EVENTS

- 6.1 The report provided information about the recent activity undertaken by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service during flooding events across the region in December 2015. ACFO Fairhead summarised the flooding incidents that had been dealt with during the first weekend of December 2015 and the Christmas weekend.
- 6.2 NWFRS had worked with Cheshire FRS to deal with incidents in the Holt area. The NWFRS' high volume pump was used for 19 hours in Beaumaris and prevented the moat around the castle from over spilling. Members noted that the high volume pump can pump 8,000-9,000 litres of water per minute and is the equivalent of having five or six fire appliances in attendance; therefore as well as having a much greater capability it also requires far fewer personnel to operate the pump. On Boxing day there had been two larger incidents where high volume pumps had been used; NWFRS' high volume pump had been used in Llanddulas and a high volume pump from Mid and West Wales FRS was utilised in Beaumaris. Also as an added complication on Boxing day the A55 near Bangor and the A5 in Capel Curig were impassable.

6.3 Members congratulated all staff involved and Cllr McGuill felt that they had worked well above the call of duty. In terms of NWFRS only having one high volume pump, Cllr McGuill suggested the Authority may need to consider purchasing a second pump as it is likely that this type of appliance will be used far more often in future.

6.4 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**

7 IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2016-17

7.1 The DCFO presented the report which:

- (i) summarised the response to the Authority's consultation on its draft Improvement Objectives 2016-17; and
- (ii) proposed the basis of a final draft Improvement Plan 2016-17 for approval by the full Authority at its next meeting on 21 March 2016.

7.2 It was pleasing to note that nearly 180 responses were received and the majority agreed with the draft objectives outlined by the Authority.

7.3 **RESOLVED to approve the production of a final draft of the Improvement Plan 2016-17 based on the four improvement objectives outlined below for approval by the full Authority at its March 2016 meeting and publication before 01 April 2016:**

Objective 1 - "To help to keep people and communities safe by preventing deaths and injuries from accidental fires in living accommodation".

Objective 2 - "Recognising the anticipated reduction in local government funding, the Authority will develop a 3-year financial strategy in which freezing the budget will be a central principle."

Objective 3 - "The Authority will re-balance its resources to match risk. It will implement a new model of resourcing which ensures the availability of at least 20 strategically located fire crews in North Wales at times of relatively lower risk, and at least 38 at times of relatively higher risk."

Objective 4 - "The Authority will explore opportunities to diversify the role of the firefighter and offer additional services to the public of North Wales."

8 MEMBERSHIP OF IMPROVEMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP

8.1 Members were asked to agree the membership of the Improvement Plan (IP) Working Group and to note the dates of meetings for 2016.

8.2 The working group will meet regularly over the coming months to further develop the objectives set with a view to publishing a draft Improvement Plan 2017-18 for public consultation towards the end of 2016 and publication in March 2017.

- 8.3 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) **agree that the full membership of the Executive Panel becomes the membership of the IP Working Group;**
 - (ii) **note the dates of the IP Working Group meetings as follows:**
 - Monday 22 February, 10am;**
 - Monday 14 March, 10am;**
 - Monday 11 April, 10am;**
 - Monday 25 April, 10am.**

9 DELEGATION OF POWERS TO THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

9.1 The report was presented to ask Members to confirm delegations to the Chief Fire Officer.

9.2 It was noted that the powers of officers are delegated by the Fire and Rescue Authority. The delegation of powers takes place by virtue of Members approving the Scheme. Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 grants the power to delegate. The existing scheme of delegation had been reviewed by the Clerk and CFO and updated where necessary. The CFO suggested that members may want to consider reviewing the scheme of delegation once more information has been confirmed about the local government reorganisation and its likely impact on the FRA.

- 9.3 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) **recommend the scheme of delegation of powers to the full Authority for approval at its March 2016 meeting;**
 - (ii) **review the scheme of delegation when further details have been confirmed about the local government reorganisation and its likely impact on the FRA.**

10 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

10.1 The DCFO presented the report which provided a summary of the information contained in the Authority's strategic risk register in accordance with the Strategic Risk Management Policy.

10.2 Members were reminded that they had previously adopted a definition of strategic risk and approved new arrangements for the overview and management of strategic risks facing the Authority. As part of the new arrangements, the Executive Panel receives a summary report on strategic risks twice a year and the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority will view the full detail of the register with officers on a regular basis.

10.3 **RESOLVED to note the identified strategic risks that the Authority faces as set out in the report.**

- 11 COMMISSIONER'S FEEDBACK ON WELSH LANGUAGE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT
- 11.1 ACFO Fairhead presented the report which summarised the feedback received from the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2014-15.
- 11.2 It was noted that positive feedback had been received and the Commissioner welcomed many aspects of the Service's work in relation to the Welsh language. The Welsh language standards are due to be published and officers from the three FRAs in Wales have been working together to prepare for when the new standards come into effect.
- 11.3 **RESOLVED to note the progress made in relation to the Service's commitment to ensuring continued promotion of the Welsh language.**