

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 21 September 2015 at Siambr Dafydd Orwig Chamber, Cyngor Gwynedd, Caernarfon. Meeting commenced at 10.30am.

PRESENT

Councillor

M LI Davies (Chair)
P R Lewis (Deputy Chair)
L W Davies
B Dunn
A Evans
J G Evans
C Hughes
R O Jones
H McGuill
G Lowe
D Macrae
D J Miles
W R Owen
W T Owen
R E Parry
J R Skelland
A Tansley
W O Thomas
G Williams

Representing

Denbighshire County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Anglesey County Council
Flintshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Anglesey County Council
Gwynedd Council
Anglesey County Council
Flintshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Gwynedd Council
Gwynedd Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Gwynedd Council

Also present:

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); K W Finch (Treasurer to the Authority); G Owens (Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer); D Docx (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); R Simmons and R Fairhead (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 Forrest (Accountant, Treasurer's Department, Conwy County Borough Council); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer) and S Jones (Member Liaison Assistant).

APOLOGIES

Councillor

R J Davies
A I Dunbar
M A Reece
W P Shotton
D Simmons
D Taylor

Representing

Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Service had been called to a fire in a public house in Dyserth on 18 September 2015; the fire was well-developed and unfortunately the body of a female had been found. The cause of death has not yet been established and the joint investigation with North Wales Police continues. It was noted that the Chair, Deputy Chair and Cllr P W Owen who represents the area had been informed of the incident by officers.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JUNE 2015

2.1 The minutes of the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 15 June 2015 were submitted for approval.

2.2 **RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true and correct record.**

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 There were no matters arising.

4 URGENT MATTERS

4.1 There were no urgent matters.

5 CHAIR'S REPORT

5.1 The report listed meetings and events attended by Cllr M Ll Davies and Cllr P R Lewis in their roles of Chair and Deputy Chair of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority between June and September 2015.

5.2 The Chair commented that the open day at Denbigh fire station to celebrate its 150 years in existence had been a very successful day. The Chair and Chief Fire Officer thanked all those that had been involved in organising the day which had also been a good opportunity to engage with the local community over fire safety issues.

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

6 DRAFT ASSESSMENT OF THE AUTHORITY'S PERFORMANCE IN 2014-15

6.1 The Corporate Planning Manager presented the draft assessment of the Authority's performance in 2014-15.

6.2 The document had been compiled in compliance with Section 15 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, to give an account of the Authority's activities and performance in 2014-15 in one document. It also summarised the Authority's performance against specified national and local performance indicators and measures of success.

- 6.3 It was noted that there were some gaps in the document in terms of comparable data performance with English FRAs as their performance data will not be published until the end of September; therefore the graphs will be updated prior to the document being published. Members were led through the document and the following issues were highlighted:
- In 2014-15 there were approximately 1,000 fewer fires per 10,000 people than in 2010-11, and the number continues to reduce.
 - NWFRS continues to deliver a relatively high number of home fire safety checks, despite the austerity measures and the reduction in grant funding, and it is pleasing to note that 36.7% of the checks carried out were as a result of referrals from partner organisations and agencies.
 - In terms of the Authority's improvement objective 1, keeping communities safe from accidental dwelling fires, the numbers are at their lowest recorded for deaths and injuries resulting from these types of incidents. It is recognised that there is still work to be done in terms of reducing dwelling fires, however, in 2014-15 there were 12 fires per 10,000 homes. Although the incidence of death is low, this remains a high priority for the Authority. It was noted that work is ongoing to identify why the number of minor injuries remains high.
 - It was noted that the Authority had been able to achieve its second improvement objective which was to maintain its level of services whilst limiting the increase in cost per head of population and had stayed within budget.
 - The Authority had achieved its third improvement objective of identifying new ways of working and providing services within the current financial constraints. This has been demonstrated through the work done to improve staff recruitment and contracts to facilitate the availability of crews on wholtime duty stations and also the changes made to non-statutory services.
- 6.4 Members were given the opportunity to ask questions about the document and it was confirmed that a summary version would be produced for publication. In response to a question about the first responders and co-responders figures, the CFO informed members that seven stations in North Wales have been chosen to undertake a co-responding pilot programme; should the pilot programme prove successful it is likely to be extended across North Wales which will increase the performance data of NWFRS in special service calls.
- 6.5 **RESOLVED to approve the draft assessment of the Authority's performance in 2014-15 for publication before the statutory deadline of 31 October 2015.**

- 7 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK 2016 ONWARDS
- 7.1 Members were informed of the Welsh Government's consultation on the draft Fire and Rescue Services National Framework which sets out the Welsh Government's vision, priorities and objectives for the FRAs in Wales. The CFO confirmed that the final response would be shared with members.
- 7.2 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) **note the information provided, and**
 - (ii) **delegate authority to the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chair, to submit a response to the consultation on behalf of the Authority by the closing date of 8 October 2015.**
- 8 IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES 2016-17 CONSULTATION
- 8.1 The DCFO presented the report which asked Members to approve the contents of the Authority's 2016-17 consultation document "Public consultation on how to maintain excellent, affordable Fire and Rescue Services in North Wales in 2016-17 and beyond".
- 8.2 It was noted that the Executive Panel had agreed the membership of an Improvement Plan (IP) Working Group which had met regularly to consider information and discuss the development of the Authority's 2016-17 improvement objectives. All Members had had the opportunity of discussing the draft objectives and had received presentations explaining the background and the work involved in their development. The Executive Panel recommended that the Authority approve the draft objectives for consultation.
- 8.3 Members were supportive of the consultation document and the summary version and felt that they were succinct and easy to understand. It was confirmed that hard copies of the documents would be circulated as well as the online version. The Chair thanked officers and the Improvement Planning Working Group for their work in developing the objectives.
- 8.4 **RESOLVED to approve the contents of the document for public consultation.**
- 9 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2014-15
- 9.1 The Treasurer presented the report which asked Members to approve the audited statement of accounts for 2014-15 and the annual governance statement.
- 9.2 It was noted that Members of the Audit Committee had received a detailed presentation on the accounts at its meeting on the 14 September 2015 in order to review the contents before submission to the Fire and Rescue Authority. The Audit Committee had no major observations nor could find any major risks in the report and would recommend it be approved by the Authority. The letter of representation addressed to both the Wales Audit Office and KPMG from the Authority was also presented for approval.

- 9.3 It was confirmed that the accounts had been audited by the Auditor appointed by the Wales Audit Office and amended in line with the findings from the audit and subsequent discussions over the accounting treatment, definitions and presentation of specific items within the accounts.
- 9.4 The Treasurer explained that the Wales Audit Office had made a recommendation that 'the Authority should review the current revaluation policy to ensure the approach to valuation of property, plant and equipment is consistent with the requirements of the Code'. The Treasurer proposed that Members approve the recommendation to change the revaluation policy for property in order for a full revaluation to be undertaken every 5 years, with the next revaluation to be undertaken on 1 April 2016.
- 9.5 Members thanked Sandra Forrest and Julie Brown for all their work in preparing the accounts and were pleased that no issues had been raised by the auditors.
- 9.6 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) approve the audited Statement of Accounts for 2014-15;**
 - (ii) approve that the policy for revaluing assets is changed so that a full revaluation of property is undertaken every 5 years;**
 - (iii) note the Letter of Representation.**
- 10 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2015-2016
- 10.1 The Treasurer led members through the report, which gave an estimated provisional outturn for the financial year 2015-16, and explained the variances to various budget headings.
- 10.2 Currently there is an estimated underspend of £25k predicted for the end of the financial year, however, this could change depending on incident levels between now and March 2016. It was noted that expenditure against budget is monitored closely by Fire and Rescue Service staff and any variances or expected variances are highlighted as soon as they occur so that measures can be put in place to ensure there is no financial risk to the Authority. Members also noted that original budget included a contribution from reserves of £223k. Due to the overall position it will not be a requirement at this time to use that reserve.
- 10.3 **RESOLVED to note the minor underspend.**
- 11 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS
- 11.1 The Treasurer presented the latest information on the Authority's treasury management and prudential indicators. As with the statement of accounts, it was noted that members of the Audit Committee at its meeting on 14 September 2015 had reviewed the contents in detail and had no major observations nor could find any major risks in the report and would recommend it be approved by the Authority.

- 11.2 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) approve the amended prudential indicators;**
 - (ii) note the current counterparties;**
 - (iii) note the new loans.**
- 12 STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT (REPORTING PERIOD 2014-2015)
- 12.1 ACFO Simmons presented the report which sought members' approval for the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report (reporting period 2014-2015) in response to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.
- 12.2 It was noted that the Service continues in its efforts to collect the relevant service delivery equality information. A six month trial is currently underway to collate equality monitoring information following road traffic collisions, special service calls and dwelling fires. This information may assist the Service in ensuring that it is engaging with all people within the community, and also determine whether any of those protected under the Equality Act are more at risk of having a fire, or being involved in an RTC. The trial will utilise various data collection methods, using written forms, face to face and online submission.
- 12.3 Members congratulated officers on the excellent report and felt it reflected the Service's enthusiasm towards the equalities agenda. Members were also pleased to see that the Service continues to share information with other agencies.
- 12.4 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) note the content of the report;**
 - (ii) approve the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2014-2015 for publication on the Service's website.**

Cllr McGuill left the meeting at this juncture.

- 13 CHIEF OFFICERS' PAY AWARD 2015
- 13.1 The Treasurer presented the report which asked Members to endorse the agreement in respect of the pay award for 2015 that has been reached by the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC). The Treasurer advised that should the Authority decide not to endorse the agreement, it could be in breach of the contract it has with chief officers as the pay award clause is part of chief officers' contracts of employment.
- 13.2 **RESOLVED to endorse the National Joint Council's decision as noted above.**