

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS

25. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
S Bradwick (Deputy Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
D Ali		Cardiff
P Drake		Vale of Glamorgan
C Elsbury		Caerphilly
E Galsworthy		Merthyr Tydfil
E Hacker		Vale of Glamorgan
C Hawker		Caerphilly
P Hannon		Newport
K Hyde		Cardiff
M Javed		Cardiff
A Jones		Torfaen
S J Jones		Rhondda Cynon Taff
R McKerlich		Cardiff
B Morgan		Rhondda Cynon Taff
M Powell		Monmouthshire
M Rahman		Newport
P Seabourne		Torfaen
V Smith		Monmouthshire

APOLOGIES:

D T Davies (Chair)		Caerphilly
C James		Bridgend
J Morgan		Blaenau Gwent
G Phillips		Cardiff
S Pickering		Rhondda Cynon Taff

ABSENT:

C Smith		Bridgend
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OFFICERS PRESENT:- CFO H Jakeway, DCO S Chapman – Monitoring Officer, ACO P Haynes – Director of People Service, ACFO A Thomas – Director of Service Delivery, ACFO R Prendergast – Director of Technical Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, Mr C Powell –

Deputy Monitoring Officer, Mr G Thomas – Head of Finance & Procurement

The Deputy Chair informed Members that unfortunately the Chair, Councillor Tudor Davies and his wife were both unwell. On behalf of Members the Deputy Chair confirmed he would send best wishes for a speedy recovery to both the Chair and Mrs Davies.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

Councillor Hannon declared a personal interest in agenda item 6.v.

Officers declared a personal interest in agenda item 6.viii, and would withdraw from the meeting before the report was presented to Members.

27. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

BEVEAREMENTS

The Deputy Chair was sad to report that Councillor Pickering's mother had passed away recently, and assured Members that the Chair had written to Councillor Pickering offering their condolences.

The Chief Fire Officer was also sad to inform Members of the death of Steven Bredenkamp, a serving Watch Manager, who had passed away on Friday evening following a courageous battle with illness.

Members and Officers held a minute's silence in respect of Watch Manager Bredenkamp.

PASSING OUT PARADE

Due to the recent cancellation of the Firefighters Passing Out Parade, Members were advised that a new date would be confirmed as soon as possible.

28. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The following minutes were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings:-

- HR & Equalities meeting held on 23 March 2015

- Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on 13 July 2015

29. UPDATE ON ACTIONS

The Deputy Chief Officer informed Members of actions undertaken since the last meeting, and provided an update on minute number 15/16 – 21.1.

30. REPORTS FOR DECISION

31.1 PUBLICATION OF ‘HOW DID WE DO IN 2014-2015’ – STAGE 2 OF THE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Deputy Chief Officer presented a report to Members in order to publish the Service’s Annual Improvement Plan Stage 2 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 incorporating the Draft Improvement Objectives for 2016-2017, and advised Members of changes to the document that were being undertaken.

RESOLVED THAT

- 31.1.1 Members agreed to note the content of the report and approved the general content.
- 31.1.2 Members approved the publication of ‘How did we do in 2014-2015’ – Stage 2 of the Annual Improvement Plan on the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Internet site by 31 October 2015, incorporating the Draft Improvement Objectives for 2016-2017.
- 31.1.3 Following discussion, Officers agreed to send a copy of the press release on the report to Members for approval.

31.2 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2014-2015

The Treasurer informed Members that South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority was required to adopt its Statement of Accounts for 2014/2015 by 30 September 2015, by which date the External Auditor was also required to provide his/her opinion on the financial statements. The presented report and appendix discharged those obligations.

RESOLVED THAT

- 31.2.1 Members agreed to adopt the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2015.

- 31.2.2 Officers agreed to present a report to the HR & Equalities Committee which would include figures relating to staff turnover rather than percentages.

31.3 AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE (AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REPORT)

The Treasurer informed Members that the Appointed Auditor was required to give their opinion on the truth and fairness of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2015.

The Treasurer and the Chair of the Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee, took the opportunity to record their gratitude and thanks to members of the Finance team for all their hard work in meeting tight deadlines in order to complete the Financial Statements.

RESOLVED THAT

- 31.3.1 Members considered the Audit of Financial Statement Report of the Appointed Auditor shown at Appendix 1 attached to the report.
- 31.3.2 Members agreed to note the letters of representation included in the Audit of Financial Statement Report and delegated authority to the Treasurer for these to be reviewed and finalised on behalf of the Authority.

31.4 2014/2015 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The Treasurer presented a report for Members to consider the results of the Treasury Management activities for the year ending 31 March 2015, in accordance with the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the Annual Treasury Management Review for 2014/2015 and approved the actual 2014/2015 prudential and treasury indicators set therein.

31.5 FIRE COVER REVIEW UPDATE ON THE SECOND APPLIANCES AT ABERGAVENNY, MONMOUTH AND CHEPSTOW

The Director of Service Delivery informed Members that Phase II of the Fire Cover Review identified that the second appliances at Abergavenny, Monmouth and Chepstow required further scrutiny during the day time to improve availability or the Authority may wish to consider alternative arrangements. A considerable amount of research had been undertaken to date, however, before presenting this to Members it was recommended that the Service would take part in an 'Emergency Medical Response' (EMR) Pilot with the Wales Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) in the Service area including within the Monmouthshire area. The findings of the nine month Emergency Medical Response pilot would be presented to Members in 2016.

RESOLVED THAT

- 31.5.1 Members agreed to the commencement of the Emergency Medical Response pilot.
- 31.5.2 Members agreed to defer their previous resolution to review availability of the second appliances at Abergavenny, Monmouth and Chepstow Fire & Rescue Stations until after the outcome of the Emergency Medical Response pilot was known.

31.6 FIRE & RESCUE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK REPORT 2013-2015

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Fire & Rescue National Framework 2012 Onwards published in 2012 set out the Welsh Government's vision, priorities, objectives and guidance for Fire & Rescue Authorities. The presented report fulfilled the Welsh Government's commitment as required under Section 25 and 62 of the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004; to report every two years on the progress of both Government and the Fire & Rescue Authorities, and identified the six priority areas for Fire & Rescue Authorities.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the content of the report and accepted as an endorsement of success and continuous improvement the Minister of Public Services satisfaction that the three Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities had acted in accordance with the Framework.

31.7 A REVIEW OF SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE RESPONSE TO A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF GRASS FIRES IN 2015

The Chief Fire Officer reminded Members that throughout March and April this year the Service had experienced an increase in the number of grass fires attended compared to 2014. Due to a significant increase in media and political interest, the Minister for Public Service commissioned his Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser and Inspector for Wales to conduct a review of the Service's activities and response arrangements.

RESOLVED THAT

- 31.7.1 Members agreed to accept the Minister for Public Services Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser's report.
- 31.7.2 Members welcomed and agreed to note the Adviser's views that the Service coped well with the additional demand.
- 31.7.3 Members welcomed and agreed to note the closing remarks of the Minister's Adviser's comments *'I have seen much that South Wales can be proud of and whilst they have a desire to become even more efficient, I am confident that they have the skills, attitude and ability to achieve their ambition to create safer communities'*.
- 31.7.4 Members unanimously agreed to issue a press release on the positive report from the Minister for Public Services Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser.
- 31.7.5 Following discussion, Officers agreed to provide Members with a presentation on 'Wildfires and Deliberate Fire-Setting'.

Officers withdrew from the meeting before the ACO People Services presented the following report.

31.8 NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR BRIGADE MANAGERS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES – JOINT CIRCULAR TO CONFIRM AGREEMENT IN RESPECT OF THE PAY AWARD FOR 2015

The ACO People Services presented a report which gave Members details of the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire & Rescue Services joint circular which confirmed the

agreement reached by the Joint Secretaries in respect of the Pay Award for 2015, and how it related to South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Principal Officers, and Heads of Service.

The ACO People Services withdrew from the meeting in order for Members to carry out their deliberations.

RESOLVED THAT

- 31.8.1 Members agreed to note the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire & Rescue Services joint circular which confirmed that agreement had been reached in respect of the pay award for 2015.
- 31.8.2 Following a vote, Members unanimously agreed to accept the 2015 NJC Pay Award dated 18 June 2015, in relation to the identified staff.

Officers returned to the meeting.

32. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

32.1 FIREFIGHTERS PENSION DISPUTE UPDATE ON INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The ACFO Technical Services provided Members with a verbal update on the 2 year old Firefighters Pension Dispute. He was pleased to report that the Fire Brigades Unions had agreed to lift 'Action Short of Strike' in respect of preparation and training for Marauding Terrorist and Fire Arms incidents.

Members were also informed that due to the new pension regulations coming into force, the Fire Brigades Union were considering a legal challenge by taking 50 test cases to a tribunal in order to challenge their legal validity. Although no figures were available regarding cost implications, Members would receive an update on this course of action at a later date.

With reference to the Strategic Reserve, Members were assured that although it was considered a challenge for the Service to maintain, the Strategic Reserve would be ready to respond if strike action was called at any time.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the verbal update on the industrial action due to the Firefighters' Pension Dispute.

32.2 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Deputy Chief Officer presented Members with the Forward Work Programme for 2015/2016.

RESOLVED THAT

Members accepted the Forward Work Programme for 2015/2016.

33. REPORTS FOR DECISION

33.1 CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL FRAMEWORK 2016 ONWARDS

The Deputy Chief Officer presented a report which drew Members' attention to the consultation exercise taking place on the Draft National Framework 2016, and were informed that the presentation that would take place would invite Members to comment on the specific questions raised in the consultation process.

RESOLVED THAT

33.1.1 Following lengthy discussion on Members views and opinions of the draft National Framework 2016, Officers agreed to note the views provided to feedback into the consultation response.

33.1.2 Following a suggestion by Members, Officers noted that the Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser should be invited to attend a future meeting in order to meet Members of the Fire & Rescue Authority.

34. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OR 2)

There were no items of urgent business.