

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD AT 1030 HRS ON MONDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE HQ

21. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
D T Davies (Chair)		Caerphilly
S Bradwick (Deputy Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taf
L Brown		Monmouthshire
K Critchley		Newport
D De'Ath		Cardiff
S Ebrahim		Cardiff
C Elsbury		Caerphilly
S Evans		Torfaen
L Davies		Merthyr Tydfil
A Hussey		Caerphilly
K McCaffer		Vale of Glamorgan
D Naughton		Cardiff
S Pickering		Rhondda Cynon Taf
A Roberts	11:35hrs	Rhondda Cynon Taf
R Shaw		Bridgend
A Slade		Torfaen
V Smith		Monmouthshire
H Thomas		Newport
D White		Bridgend
J Williams		Cardiff

APOLOGIES:

D Ali	Cardiff
J Collins	Blaenau Gwent
R Crowley	Vale of Glamorgan
J Harries	Rhondda Cynon Taf
G Thomas	Blaenau Gwent

OFFICERS PRESENT: CFO H Jakeway; DCO S Chapman – Monitoring Officer; Mr C Barton – Treasurer; ACFO A Thomas – Director of Service Delivery; ACFO R Prendergast – Director of Technical Services; AM D Rose – Head of Operations; AM G Davies – Head of Ops Risk Management; Mr G Thomas – Head of Finance & Procurement; Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer; Mr M Jones – Wales Audit Officer

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

23. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

CREW MANAGER ALAN GWILLIM

The Chair advised Members with regret that early in August, Crew Manager Alan Gwillim of Tredegar Fire & Rescue Station passed away whilst on holiday with his family and friends. Alan's funeral took place last Monday and it was clear that South Wales Fire & Rescue Service was a huge part of Alan's life. Alan will be sorely missed by his friends and colleagues from across the Service.

A minute's silence was observed to pay respects to Alan.

RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR GODFREY THOMAS

The Chair announced that Cllr G Thomas of Blaenau Gwent CBC has resigned his position due to family ill-health, and confirmed that he had written to him on behalf of the Authority extending good wishes. Cllr Joanne Collins has been appointed as his replacement.

SUMMER FIRES

The Chair wishes to record his and the Authority's thanks to all personnel that worked so hard during the summer months. A report later on the agenda clearly shows the impact the warm weather had on our Service, which has also been recognised by many of our partners who have expressed their thanks to the Chief Fire Officer.

UNITED KINGDOM RESCUE ORGANISATION (UKRO) EVENT

The Chair reminded Members that the Service is hosting the UKRO Challenge event on 27-29 September 2018. A short presentation outlining the event is on today's agenda.

OPENING OF BARRY EMERGENCY SERVICES STATION

The Chair informed Members that the Deputy Chair had attended the formal opening of Barry Emergency Services Station on 20 September 2018, following its extensive refurbishment and the subsequent occupation by the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust.

NJC PAY AWARD

The Chair reported that the NJC has agreed a two-stage approach in respect of the 2018 pay settlement for brigade managers which provides a 1.0% increase on 2017 basic salary levels with effect from 1 January 2018, rising to a 2.0% increase on 2017 basic salary levels with effect from 1 July 2018.

RETIREMENT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER ANDY THOMAS, DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Being his last meeting of the Fire Authority before his retirement on 30 September 2018, the Chair thanked Andy Thomas for his outstanding leadership within the Service. As a great ambassador for the Service and always leading change from the front, Andy is well respected across the rank and file of the Service and his sense of humour, professionalism and presence will be missed by all.

The Chair and Members wished Andy and his family a happy and healthy retirement.

APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Following a fiercely competitive process, the Chair was pleased to announce the appointment of Area Manager Dewi Rose to the post of Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Service Delivery.

The Chair and Members congratulated Dewi on his promotion.

POLITICAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP

The Chair advised that there had been a change in the political group membership of the Authority which meant political balance had changed and there would be a need to amend the committee seats accordingly. Following a recommendation by the Chair, it was resolved that the Monitoring Officer be granted delegated authority to review the political balance of the Authority and to agree revised membership with the relevant group leaders. This was unanimously supported.

24. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

- Finance, Asset & Performance Management Working Group held on 15 January 2018
- HR & Equalities Committee held on 5 February 2018.

- Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee held on 23 April 2018.
- Fire & Rescue Authority held on 9 July 2018.

25. UPDATE ON ACTIONS

Land at Lanelay Hall

The Deputy Chief Officer confirmed the closure of the action point following successful disposal of the land identified as surplus to requirements at the rear of Lanelay Hall.

Principal Officer Vacancies

The Chief Fire Officer reported that following the advertisement for the post of Assistant Chief Officer, Director of People Services, 15 applicants had been shortlisted and invited to attend an Assessment Centre on 1 October 2018. Those successful will be invited to professional interview by the Executive Leadership Team and subsequent interview by the Authority's Appointment Panel. Interview dates will be confirmed by the Acting Director of People Services.

26. REPORTS FOR DECISION

26.1 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

The Treasurer provided Members with an update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the Authority, including the current strategy and the immediate challenges facing the Authority in setting its budget for the next financial year and planning assumptions 2020 and beyond.

RESOLVED THAT

- 26.1.1 Following a question and answer session, Members noted and agreed the report content as the basis of its financial strategy.
- 26.1.2 In addition to the meetings listed within the report, the Treasurer agreed to include an update report to the meeting of Fire Authority on 17 December 2018.
- 26.1.2 The Treasurer agreed to notify Members when the letter of consultation is sent to home authorities.

26.2 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2017/18

The Treasurer and the Appointed Auditor notified Members that the Appointed Auditor is required to give his opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2018. The presented report considered the statutory ISA260

report (draft) and the final Statement of Accounts. The letter of representation required by the Auditor will subsequently be reported to the Fire & Rescue Authority.

Members were reminded that they had received an updated version of the audit report and statement of accounts since the report was published and that hard copies of these were available.

Members noted with concern the revised deadlines for the preparation and publication of the financial statements for 2018/19 onwards, and the added pressure this will place on the Fire Authority.

RESOLVED THAT

26.2.1 Following discussion and the provision of clarity on aspects of the report, Members received the draft ISA260 report of the Appointed Auditor.

26.2.2 Members approved the audited Statement of Accounts.

26.2.3 Members noted the letter of representation.

26.3 2017/18 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The Treasurer presented the results of treasury management activities for the year ending 31 March 2018, in accordance with the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy, for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the annual treasury management review for 2017/18 and approved the actual 2017/18 prudential and treasury indicators set therein.

26.4 POTENTIAL REFORM OF FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITIES

The Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Officer provided Members with an update on Welsh Government's intention to review the governance and funding arrangements of the Fire & Rescue Authorities in Wales.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the Cabinet Secretary intends to issue a White Paper prior to the leadership elections at Welsh Government, with a view to reform taking place next financial year. It is currently unknown however what recommendations will be contained within the White paper but it is understood from Welsh Government officials that it will propose to reform two key areas. The first is the funding mechanism, and the second concerns the ability of the Fire Authority to effectively scrutinise business.

It is expected that the White Paper consultation will commence in October.

Members frankly discussed their views but agreed to await the White Paper consultation before making representation. The Chair advised that a special meeting of the Fire Authority will be convened to discuss further at that time, if required.

RESOLVED THAT

26.4.1 Members agreed to note the content of the report and agreed to receive further updates on the issue as appropriate.

26.4.2 A special meeting of the Fire Authority will be convened to discuss the White Paper, if required.

26.5 WALES AUDIT OFFICE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2017/18

The Deputy Chief Officer presented to Members a report which concludes the Wales Audit Office review of the Authority's delivery and evaluation of services in relation to 2017/18, and whether it believes that the Authority is likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2018/19.

The typographical error in paragraph 3.1 was noted and it was confirmed that this should read '2017/18' not '2016/17'.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to accept the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2017/18 for the Authority.

27. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

27.1 UPDATE ON GRASS FIRE INCIDENTS ATTENDED AND CALL VOLUMES DURING THE SUMMER PERIOD

The Director of Service Delivery provided Members with a detailed update of the number of grass fire incidents attended in South Wales Fire & Rescue Service's administrative area, and reported that the number of calls received by the Joint Fire Control during the summer of 2018 was extremely high.

Members noted the consequent impact on crews and fire control, and both Officers and Members expressed their sincere gratitude to all staff for their hard work and dedication in keeping the communities of South Wales safe during this period.

RESOLVED THAT

Members reviewed the details provided within Appendix 1 of the report, and noted the adverse effect that the sustained period of warm weather experienced this summer has had on members of staff and the communities of South Wales.

27.2 PRESENTATION ON UNITED KINGDOM RESCUE ORGANISATION (UKRO) EVENT – 27-29 SEPTEMBER 2018

The UKRO Project Lead provided Members with an update presentation on the UKRO Challenge event that is being hosted by South Wales Fire & Rescue Service on 27-29 September 2018.

Officers and Members noted the considerable amount of work undertaken by a large number of staff within the Service to ensure the event is a success and conveyed their thanks accordingly.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the content of the presentation.

27.3 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Deputy Chief Officer presented the Forward Work Programme for 2018/19.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the content of the Forward Work Programme.

28. REPORT FOR DECISION

EXCLUDED FROM PUBLICATION TO PRESS AND PUBLIC BY VIRTUE OF SECTION 100A AND PARAGRAPHS 12 & 13 OF PART 4 OF SCHEDULE 12a OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED)

28.1 RESTRUCTURE TO MEET FUTURE CHALLENGES AND DEMANDS

Members received a report from the Chief Fire Officer who summarised the key pressures on the current temporary staffing structures and identified recommendations to resolve these pressures and stabilise the staffing structure without increasing the overall pay budget of the Authority.

MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT

- 28.1.1 Members approved the proposed new establishment structure as detailed.
- 28.1.2 Members agreed to note that relevant corporate posts will be subject to the new job evaluation scheme to be implemented by the Service.
- 28.1.3 Members approved the proposed funding mechanism detailed within the report to deliver the new establishment structure.
- 28.1.4 Members authorised the Executive Leadership Team to implement the new structure at the earliest opportunity.
- 28.1.5 Members agreed to receive updates on the progress of appointing to the new structure at both the Finance, Audit & Performance Management and HR & Equalities Committees via their normal budget monitoring and staff monitoring reports.
- 28.1.6 Members approved an amendment to the Scheme of Delegations to permit changes to the approved new establishment structure to be made by the Director of People Services and the Head of Paid Service, providing such changes can be secured within the total pay budget approved by the Authority.

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

There were no items of business that the Chair deemed urgent.