

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 1000 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 8 OR REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

41. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
S Bradwick (Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
P Drake (Deputy Chair)		Vale of Glamorgan
J Morgan		Blaenau Gwent
P Ford		Bridgend
M Hughes		Bridgend
C Elsbury	Left at 1100 hrs	Caerphilly
A Hussey		Caerphilly
C Wright		Caerphilly
D Ali		Cardiff
K Carr		Cardiff
D Naughton		Cardiff
D Isaac		Merthyr Tydfil
S McConnel	Left at 1200 hrs	Monmouthshire
M Powell		Monmouthshire
M Al-Nuaimi		Newport
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
D Parkin	Joined at 1015 hrs	Rhondda Cynon Taff
A Roberts		Rhondda Cynon Taff
S Evans		Torfaen

APOLOGIES:

B Proctor	Cardiff
T Watkins	Newport
I Buckley	Vale of Glamorgan
ACFO R Prendergast	Director of Tech Services

ABSENT:

S Melbourne	Cardiff
A Best	Torfaen

OFFICERS PRESENT:- CFO H Jakeway, T/DCFO D Rose – Director of Service Delivery, T/ACFO G Davies – Director of Technical Services, T/ACFO N Williams – Director of Industrial Action, ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, ACO G Thomas – Monitoring Officer & Director of Corporate Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer & Head of Corporate Support, Mr C Rigby – Audit Wales Officer

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillors Evans declared a personal interest in any items which related to New Inn Fire Station.

43. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **TRAGIC DEATH OF FIREFIGHTER IN SCOTLAND**

The Chair took the opportunity to express Members condolences and support to the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and the family, following the death of Firefighter Barry Martin. Barry was one of five firefighters taken to hospital following an incident on Princess Street, Edinburgh, on 23 January, 2023. Members were advised that at 10:50 am they would be pausing the meeting to join colleagues across the UK who would be observing a minute's silence at 11:00 am as a mark of respect would join all staff gathering at the memorial stone for a moment of reflection. Members and Officers noted that the meeting would reconvene at 11:10 am.

- **FORMER DEPUTY CHAIRMAN COUNCILLOR KEITH HYDE**

On behalf of Members the Chair extended sympathies to the family of a former Deputy Chairperson of the Fire & Rescue Authority, Councillor Keith Hyde. Councillor Hyde was a Member of the Fire Authority from 2004 to 2017.

- **COUNCILLOR AUFRON ROBERTS**

On behalf of all Members and Officers of the Fire & Rescue Authority, the Chair congratulated Councillor Roberts on being

awarded the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the New Year's Honours list.

- **INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

The Chair reported that following the Fire Brigades Union ballot over a nationwide pay dispute, 88% of those who voted were in favour of taking industrial action. Further negotiations took place on 8 February, 2023, where an improved offer was made resulting in the FBU postponing industrial action while they balloted members on the latest offer. Members were informed that a further update would be provided as part of the agenda at the end of the meeting.

- **ISAR DEPLOYMENT TO TURKEY**

The Chair reported that three operational members of the Service had been deployed to Turkey to assist the International Search & Rescue team, following the devastating earthquake last week. On behalf of Members the Chair extended thanks for their commitment to supporting the rescue efforts.

Following a request by the Chair, T/ACFO Garry Davies confirmed that he would provide a brief update on the ongoing work being undertaken by the operational team members towards the end of the meeting.

- **RECENT FIRE FATALITY**

The Chair was deeply sad to report that the crews from Merthyr Station attended a fire fatality on Sunday, 22 January, 2023, and thoughts were with the family and loved ones of the individual concerned. The Chair wished to express Members thanks to the crews for their valiant efforts at the incident.

Following a request by the Chair, T/DCFO Rose confirmed that he would provide Members with an update on the incident towards the end of the meeting.

- **THE SOCIAL PARTENERSHIP FORUM**

The Chair informed Members that last month he and the Chief Fire Officer attended the first Fire & Rescue Social Partnership Forum established by the Deputy Minister, along with colleagues from Mid & West Wales FRS, and North Wales FRS, along with WLGA and Fire & Rescue trade union officials. Members noted that it was a

busy and full agenda with very productive discussions on a vast array of areas.

44. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

- Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on Monday, 19 December 2022
- Standards Committee meeting held on Monday, 3 October, 2022
- Local Pension Board Committee meeting held on Monday, 17 October, 2022
- Scrutiny Group meeting held on Friday, 28 November, 2022

45. UPDATE ON ACTIONS

The ACO People Services and ACO Corporate Services provided a brief overview and update on the following outstanding actions:- 21/22-17.3.2, 21/22-17.3.3, and 21/22-32.3.3.

46. REPORTS FOR DECISION

46.1. INDEPENDENT CULTURAL REVIEW

The Monitoring Officer and Chief Fire Officer advised that the purpose of the presented report was to update Members on the process of appointing an Independent Review Chairperson, the Terms of Reference for the review, the timescales and potential impacts arising from the review.

Following a lengthy question and answer session on Members concerns relating to the Independent Cultural Review, which included the high cost of appointing a King's Counsel, and whether there would be a possibility of extending the 5 year timeframe for reviewing historical disciplinary cases, Officers assured Members that the Terms of Reference were only in draft format and could be reviewed and amended by the appointed Chair of the Review.

Members also raised their concerns that the Welsh Government Deputy Minister had objected to the appointment of the Chief Fire Officer and Chairman of the Fire Authority being involved in the Independent Cultural Review process, even though the Service had commissioned the review and were covering the whole cost.

Following further debate, Officers assured Members that the CFO and Chair would be acting as advisers to the Independent Panel Members and confirmed that they had taken onboard their comments relating to the possibility of extending the 5 year period and would review the Terms of Reference in due course.

All Members and Officers withdrew from the meeting room at 1050 hrs to attend a short Memorial Service.

All Members and Officers returned to the meeting room at 1105 hrs to reconvene the formal meeting.

RESOLVED THAT

- 46.1.1 Members unanimously agreed to approve the creation of an Independent Appointment Board consisting of the membership outlined in paragraph 2.3 within the report.
- 46.1.2 Following slight amendments by Officers, Members unanimously agreed to approve the draft Terms of Reference for the Independent Review attached to the report at Appendix 1.
- 46.1.3 Members unanimously agreed to approve the allocation of earmarked reserves as outline in paragraph 3.3.4 within the report.
- 46.1.4 Following a request by the Monitoring Officer for nominations for Members to form the Authority Review Board, Councillors McConnell, Wright, Morgan, Carr and Evans all agreed to provide ongoing support to the Independent Chairperson throughout the review.

46.2 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET DETERMINATION FOR 2023/24

The Treasurer informed Members that the presented report included the recommended Revenue and Capital budget for 2023/24 together with the responses to the consultation exercise undertaken.

The Fire Authority was asked to approve the budget, including a proposed Revenue budget of £89,375,478 representing a 12.70% increase over that set for 2022/23. This increase assumed that the Welsh Government's Scape grant previously paid to the Fire Authority, would be transferred to constituent councils in the final local government settlement as outlined by the Deputy Minister.

RESOLVED THAT

- 46.2.1 Following lengthy debate, Members agreed to approve the proposed Revenue and Capital budgets included within the presented report.
- 46.2.2 Members agreed to give delegated authority to the Treasurer to make an appropriate adjustment to the Revenue budget if the Scape Grant was not transferred into the local government settlement.

46.3 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TARGET SETTING 2023/2024

The T/DCFO Service Delivery presented a report for Members to consider the Strategic Performance Indicator Targets for 2023/2024.

RESOLVED THAT

- 46.3.1 Following a question and answer session on concerns relating to tackling grassfires and issues with climate change, Members agreed to approve the Strategic Performance Indicator Targets proposed for 2023/2024.
- 46.3.2 Members agreed to approve delegation to the T/Deputy Chief Fire Officer to review Quarter 4

2022/2023 data, planned reduction strategies, and refine targets as necessary.

46.3.3 Members agreed to approve publication of the Strategic Performance Indicator Targets on to the SWFRS internet site.

46.4 REPORT ON RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE STRATEGIC THEMES AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2023/2024

The Head of Corporate Support informed Members that the Service had recently consulted with the public on the Strategic Themes and Objectives developed for 2023/2024. Members were asked to consider the responses received during the consultation that ran from 21 October, 2022 to 13 January 2023.

Councillor McConnell left the meeting at 1200 hrs.

RESOLVED THAT

46.4.1 Members agreed to review the consultation evaluation in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

46.4.2 Members agreed to approve the Strategic Themes and Objectives detailed in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

47. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

47.1 AUDIT OF SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY'S ASSESSMENT OF 2021-22 PERFORMANCE

The Audit Wales Officer provided Members with a brief overview of the audit of South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's assessment of 2021/22 performance.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the brief update.

47.2 AUDIT WALES ANNUAL AUDIT SUMMARY 2022

The Audit Wales Officer provided Members with a brief overview of the Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2022.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the update on the Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2022.

47.3 REPORT ON ISAR DEPLOYMENT TO TURKEY

The T/ACFO Technical Services provided Members with a verbal update on the deployment of a team of operational firefighters to Turkey following the recent devastating earthquake in the region.

Officers took the opportunity to thank Members for their ongoing support to quickly deploy operational personnel to such tragic events.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the verbal update report.

47.4 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023

The Monitoring Officer provided a brief overview of the Forward Work Programme for 2022/2023.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the Forward Work Programme for 2022/2023.

With reference to Members Development Day due to take place at Cardiff Gate Training & Development Centre in March, Officers agreed to provide further information on the awareness and development sessions in due course.

Officers also assured Members that if they were unable to attend the Development Day then alternative dates would be provided.

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

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

49. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC BY VIRTUE OF SECTION 100A AND PARAGRAPHS 14 & 15 OF PART 4 OF SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED)

A resolution to exclude the press and public by virtue of Section 100A and Paragraphs 14 and 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) was passed.

49.1. PREPARATIONS FOR OPERATION ATEGOL – SERVICES ACTIONS IN THE EVENT OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY FIRE BRIGADES UNION

The Chief Fire Officer and T/ACFO Industrial Action provided Members with a verbal update on preparations for Operation ATEGOL, and the Services actions in the event of Industrial Action by the Fire Brigades Union.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the verbal update on Operation ATEGOL.