

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 28 MARCH 2025 AT 10:30 IN MEETING ROOM 08 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Vij Randeniya, Chair
Kirsty Williams
Baroness Wilcox of Newport
Carl Foulkes

OFFICERS PRESENT: Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan, ACO Alison Reed – Director of People Services, ACFO Brian Thompson - Director of Technical Services, T/ACFO Christian Hadfield – Director of Corporate Services, Lisa Mullan – Head of Finance, Procurement and Property, Dominic Mika – Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, Gabrielle Greathead – Interim Monitoring Officer, T/AM Matt Jones – Head of Operations, Wayne Thomas – T/Head of Corporate Support, Jemma Wells – People Services Business Partner, Christian Landeg-John – Advisor to Commissioners

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were recorded for ACFO Dean Loader, Director of Service Delivery and Kate Havard, Audit Wales.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced the following:

Women in the Fire Service – South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will be hosting the Women in the Fire Service Cymru in October 2025.

Whole time Recruits Course: Recruits started their course on 13 January and will celebrate their pass out on 16 April.

Taking Care of Behaviours: This will launch in April 2025. Training sessions will focus on upskilling employees on a range of behaviours

whilst providing gives guidance to everyone on how they can be an upstander and not a bystander for all sorts of behaviour that causes harm, inequality and prejudice.

National Fire Cadet Games: South Wales Fire and Rescue will be hosting the Games between 25-27 July 2025 which will be held at Cardiff Metropolitan University and will involve Fire Cadets representing nearly all areas of the UK taking part in a series of events and challenges.

The Chair congratulated Interim Monitoring Officer Gabrielle Greathead on her upcoming maternity leave and thanked her for her contribution to the Committee meetings.

4. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF:

a. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2025

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion and no matters arising.

b. LOCAL PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER 2024

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion and no matters arising.

c. PEOPLE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2024

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion and no matters arising.

5. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The action log has been updated to remove closed actions.

6. REPORTS FOR DECISION

6.1 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26

Alison Reed, Director of People Services presented the pay policy statement that provides a forward look and sets out a clear pay policy statement on all forms related to pay. This report was discussed at the People Committee on 27 March 2025 to which the Committee had no

concerns and was content with the report. The Pay Policy Statement has been updated and Alison Reed has pre-empted the discussion around market supplements. It was noted on paragraph 14 that reference to introduction of market supplements for retention and recruitment has been inserted. Alison Reed flagged that the pay rates were reflected of the last national agreed pay uplift, and when this is agreed nationally, the document will be updated to reflect the update. Vij Randeniya commented that there will be a delay, as there is a requirement to report by March and pay discussions are ongoing. Carl Foulkes queried the scrutiny around temporary acting up and honorarium payments and if this will be developed in the future. The Morris Report recommended that a regular review is conducted and Alison Reed stated that she is in the process of doing this. We are seeing more permanent roles filled which will reduce the number of temporary positions. The Service doesn't currently have a temporary promotion procedure but there is a first draft which will go through scrutiny with the Representative Bodies. Once the policy is live then there will be more transparency. The Chief Fire Officer stated that there are workshops underway on promotional processes which provide an opportunity for everyone in the Service to contribute to this.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.1.1 The Commissioners reviewed and approved the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/2026

6.2 2024 GENDER PAY GAP

Jemma Wells, People Services Business Partner presented the 2024 Gender Pay Gap. The data within the report is up to 31st March 2024. There have been several reasons for the continuous decrease such as increasing number of women joining the Service, initiatives such as Work Out With The Watch, blind sifting on application, new learning pathways, increased awareness on menstruation and menopause and enhanced maternity benefits. The Service is continuing its initiatives including the introduction of agile working. The Chief Fire Officer welcomes the points in paragraph 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 and wants everyone on board.

Lady Wilcox noted that there is important data within the report and stated that as long as we are continuing to move forward, we are in a better position than where we began. Carl Foulkes and Kirsty Williams supported the Chief Fire Officers points and asked how progressive we want to be as a Service and the importance of explaining how these initiatives are making us a better Service and taking progressive steps to deliver a better service to the public.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.2.1 The Commissioners approved the 2024 Gender Pay Gap report and Appendix 1 to be published.

6.3 INTRODUCTION OF MARKET SUPPLEMENTS FOR CORPORATE ROLES TO SUPPORT RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES

Alison Reed, Director of People Services presented the report which was discussed at length at the People Committee on the 27 March 2025. The content of the report sets the proposal in retention of employees and the approach. Alison Reed highlighted an important point in that this is not the case of paying people to not leave, more so when someone has another offer, and a conversation will be had to determine whether the job role is graded properly. This would also apply to everyone if there were more than one position and thus will need tight governance.

Kirsty Williams agreed that it is right to look at retention and it is important to recognise that these have to be seen in the context of the wider job market and our availability to recruit into critical roles that are challenging to recruit in. The Commissioners were happy to approve.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.3.1 The Commissioners noted and agreed the report to implement the provision of market supplements with immediate effect to address business critical retention needs.
- 6.3.2 The Commissioners noted that the Service's Pay Policy Statement has been updated to include the provision of market supplements for corporate staff.

6.4 STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025/2040

Wayne Thomas, Head of Corporate Support presented the strategic improvement plan which highlights the Service's long term plans and outlines the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act. The plan captures the recommendations from the Morris Report and the consultation has been incorporated into the plan. There have been key developments on the plan since the Annual Improvement Plan was brought to the Commissioners in October and following feedback it has been made more concise, accessible and clear on what we needed to do. The Service progressed on an easy read version and a Welsh version is being developed. Vij Randeniya queried whether it is amendable due to

the HMICFRS report being released in May. Wayne Thomas advised this could be easily incorporated. Dominic Mika thanked the team for producing the plan and acknowledging that they were up against strict deadlines. The Chief Fire Officer noted there was a timeline to meet as they were doing this in parallel with the strategy and the plan is fitted into the bigger strategy.

Lady Wilcox emphasised the importance of being able to amend the document to include HMI and was pleased with the clarity of the report. Carl Foulkes commented that cutting the plan down to focus on areas is good and it will keep evolving over time.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.4.1 The Commissioners approved the publication of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2025 2040.

6.5 PROVISIONAL STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATOR PROJECTIONS 2025/2026

Matt Jones, Head of Operations presented the report and noted a few highlights. One is that we are not extracting casualties from vehicles as much due to the modern car structure. We have included a metric of the percentage of dwelling fires, this is the first year we have included this key performance indicator that will form a metric for us to record. We are seeing higher road traffic collisions but less severity. There has been a decrease in special service calls; a Duty Group Manager has been embedded to support Control with challenging calls which is seeing a benefit in flooding and wildfire calls. Kirsty Williams was pleased to see that we have added room of origin, and this is a positive addition to the report. In terms of Automatic Fire Alarms, Kirsty Williams wants this to be a live document to allow for this to be updated to see the predictions of the AFA's as we are still in the phases. It was highlighted we will see a reduction in the future.

Kirsty Williams shared that she received positive feedback from Welsh Government around the support offered to new recruits and their first time experiencing a fatal fire. Welsh Government was impressed by the level of support that was given to the recruits and their families. Carl Foulkes queried whether the data is giving us the KPI's we need over the next 3 years, and able to demonstrate the impact we are having and our response to these incidents. Vij Randeniya noted there are some controlled burns that we still support however, Matt Jones said that we can do a deeper dive into how we capture this data and will pick this up with Wayne Thomas.

Christian Hadfield made some observations on how we present our data to the public, and by looking at a software we are able to demonstrate percentages to give clearer look to the public. Secondly, it was brought up that we have 7 key indicators that we are measuring, however water rescue is not a main indicator and requested to include this as the Service invests heavily into this. Kirsty Williams would like to record that this is for the Commissioners to pursue with Welsh Government to include Water Rescue into the key indicators and Christian Hadfield will provide a briefing note for the Commissioners but will add Water Rescue and Flooding on their internal reporting. Brian Thompson assured the Commissioners that they do have this detail at the Service Delivery meetings.

RESOVLED THAT

- 6.5.1 The Commissioners noted the provisional Performance Indicator Targets for 2025/26.
- 6.5.2 The Commissioners approved delegation to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer to review Q4 2024/25 data and planned reduction strategies and refine projections as necessary.
- 6.5.3 The Commissioners approved publication of projections onto the SWFRS internet site.

6.6 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2025/2026

Lisa Mullan, Head of Finance, Procurement and Property presented the report. Lady Wilcox assured the Board that that the Treasury Management Strategy was vigorously evaluated at the Finance and Audit Committee on 7 March 2025. Lisa Mullan explained that the report provides the framework the officers will operate from during the year and a framework that the Commissioners can assess. The second main function is that we ensure we can borrow within affordable limits to fund the capital programme, which is a key issue for Commissioners to note. Lisa Mullan expressed it was important to note that we are under borrowed and we could be looking at an ask from Welsh Government to provide capital funding. Lady Wilcox stated that this is an opportunity to ask for a capital fund due to future changes following from the CRMP. Vij Randeniya suggested that Lisa Mullan draft a plan that we can provide to Welsh Government and a report to be presented to the Commissioners setting out suitable options.

There was a discussion on capital funding and the allocation. Carl Foulkes queried funding around the transformation programme. The Chief Fire Officer explained the aim of the recent SLT Away Day was to

obtain timelines and costings for the activities that we are doing, albeit a further conversation needs to be had on how we use the money. Lisa Mullan will come back with a reserve policy in September. She would like to see a plan so we have numbers for an overall strategic piece that involved permanent, temporary, revenue and capital.

RESVOLED THAT

6.6.1 The Commissioners noted and approved the following:

- The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS)
- Capital / Prudential indicators
- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy
- Borrowing strategy
- Treasury indicators and limits
- Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)
- The Treasurer to update strategies / policies as necessary

6.7 CARBON REDUCTION 2030 ROADMAP

Bethan Harvey, Sustainability Officer presented the Carbon Reduction Roadmap which sets out the vision ahead and progress in phase 2 up to 2027 and the tasks to embed this into the Service. Bethan Harvey looks to publish the plan and implement the tasks. This will be monitored by the sustainability working group and will ensure our asset categories are covered. Lady Wilcox commented that this is a good piece of work and thanked Bethan for compiling this data. Bethan Harvey stated that if we need to cover more tasks then she is open to recruiting to the working group and adding new areas.

A discussion on costing and grants was had and Lisa Mullan reported that as it is one individual working under Sustainability the budget is subsumed into the Property budget. We have been successful over the last 2 years with funding, and we will be looking at funding for solar panel and low carbon heat grant. If we are looking at strategic sustainability plans for investment pieces, then a grant would be beneficial for us to target. The Chief Fire Officer expressed that we need to do as much as we can to help climate change and wanted to expressively state that if Bethan encounters problems to inform him. Vij Randeniya asked if we can calculate the CO2 impact to the atmosphere from a wildfire; Christian Hadfield picked this up under the socioeconomic impact the Service has and will look to address this in the CRMP.

RESOVLED THAT

- 6.7.1 The Commissioners agreed to the new Carbon Reduction Plan and supported the format.
- 6.7.2 The Commissioners noted the immediate priorities and importance of building robust systems before more reaching work can be achieved.

6.8 SWFRS COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Christian Hadfield, Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a paper to implement a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The Service felt as an organisation we are at a good point to carry out a full CRMP. A fire cover review was completed in 2013 which was part of a wider plan of financial reductions which saw the outcome of 2 fire stations closing. Since then, the risk has significantly changed in terms of population and infrastructure. Christian Hadfield advised we will follow guidance from the NFCC as there are elements of the framework that we can use through the lifespan of the project. We will be focusing on 4 areas which are Response, Prevention, Protection and Resilience and propose to engage in a live simulations that will give clear indication where our risks lies. In terms of financial and procurement, it is proposed it will cost £45k plus VAT. Phase 1 would be the data analysis stage for approximately 14-18 weeks while the data is inputted and then he will have a substantial update in August for the model simulation package.

Kirsty Williams noted that this will be the bedrock on how we take the organisation forward and referred back to the report for further explanations on the phases and timescales of the CRMP and how we will engage with communities to feed into the process. Our first phase between now and August will allow us to make informed decisions with the data analysis then we will move to engagement with stakeholders and the public. Christian Hadfield has been working with Vale of Glamorgan Public Service Board to look at how we engage wider. Kirsty Williams commented that following the mechanisms we used to engage with the Strategic Plan we know we won't receive much response and consider adapting our communication methods. The Head of Communications and Engagement has worked on a draft and as we move through the phases this will be brought to the Commissioners. The Chief Fire Officer stated that we are approaching this plan with no preconceived ideas and will be a data driven piece of work. Matt Jones added that to offer assurance that we need to be careful with the terminology used when conducting the CRMP.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.8.1 The Commissioners noted the report and agreed to implement a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and associate investment with immediate effect.

6.9 ESTABLISHMENT OF A PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Dominic Mika, Director of Strategic Change and Transformation presented to the Board the proposal to establish a Portfolio Management Office (PMO). Lady Wilcox noted that this report has been extensively discussed at the Finance and Audit Committee on 21 March 2025.

Approval has been given to recruit 3 transformation programme managers and a project manager which were initially recruited on a 12 month basis and has been extended to 24 months, with the opportunity to be made permanent. This will continue to be reviewed to adjust to business needs.

RESOVLED THAT

- 6.9.1 The Commissioners approved the implementation of a permanent Portfolio Management Office (PMO)
- 6.9.2 The Commissioners approved and support the required recruitment of personnel to resource the PMO.

7. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

7.1 CORE CODE OF ETHICS UPDATE

Dominic Mika, Director of Strategic Change and Transformation provided an update on the Core Code of Ethics and listed the engagement that has been undertaken. The Chief Fire Officer has met with over 150 people and a common theme from these visits is that people would now like to see the Core Code of Ethics and the Vision, Mission and Values embedded which will allow us to move forward with the Service's strategy. The Board agreed in moving forward.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.1.1 The Commissioners noted the update.

7.2 COMMITTEE DATES 2025/2026

The committee dates for 2025/2026 has been prepared and provides a forward look of the calendar which will be available for the public. The Chief Fire Officer stressed that lateness of reports are causing issues as it does not allow time for people to make any further comments. An executive decision was made that if reports are not submitted by the deadline then these will get pulled from the agenda, notwithstanding statutory reporting deadlines. Wayne Thomas added that the Service has always met our external public deadlines.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.2.1 The Commissioners noted the committee calendar for publication.

7.3 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE 2025/2026

The Forward Work Programme for the municipal year from May 2025 to March 2026 has been created.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.9.1 The Commissioners noted the Forward Work Programme.

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

There were no items that the Chairperson deemed urgent.