

## **NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Minutes of the meeting of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 19 September 2016 at Denbighshire County Council Chamber, Ruthin. Meeting commenced at 10.30am.

### **PRESENT**

#### **Councillor**

M LI Davies (Chair)  
P R Lewis (Deputy Chair)  
B Cowie  
A I Dunbar  
B Dunn  
A Evans  
J G Evans  
M Holland  
A M Jones  
R O Jones  
G Lowe  
H McGuill  
W R Owen  
W T Owen  
P Pemberton  
W P Shotton  
J R Skelland  
W O Thomas  
J Vaughan  
D Wisinger

#### **Representing**

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

### **Also present:**

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); C Everett (Clerk and Monitoring Officer); R Simmons and R Fairhead (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); G Brandrick (Senior Professional and Service Standards Manager); S Millington (Senior Fire Safety Manager); C Nott (Temporary Training and Development Manager); K Roberts (Senior Operations Manager); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); S Forrest (Accountant, Conwy County Borough Council); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer) and S Jones (Member Liaison Assistant).

### **APOLOGIES**

	<b>Representing</b>
Cllr L W Davies	Anglesey County Council
Cllr C Hughes	Gwynedd Council
Cllr D MacRae	Conwy County Borough Council
Cllr R E Parry	Conwy County Borough Council
Cllr P Prendergast	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr A Tansley	Conwy County Borough Council
Cllr D Taylor	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr G G Williams	Gwynedd Council
D Docx	Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Interim Treasurer

Members' noted the Deputy Chief Fire Officer's absence and sent their best wishes to her. The CFO also informed Members that following Gareth Griffiths' retirement, Chris Nott had been appointed to the role of Senior Training and Development Manager on a temporary basis until 2017 and that Peter Davis had been appointed to the role of Head of Control on a permanent basis.

## 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## 2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JUNE 2016

2.1 The minutes of the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 20 June were submitted for approval.

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

## 3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 6.8 – information from other areas that had a prison in the vicinity – the CFO confirmed that this information would be presented to Members together with the outcome of the consultation process later in the year.

## 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 Li 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 2016.

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

## 6 DRAFT ASSESSMENT OF THE AUTHORITY'S PERFORMANCE IN 2015-16

6.1 The Chief Fire Officer presented the draft assessment of the Authority's performance in 2015-16; it 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 for 2015-16 in one document. It also summarised the Authority's performance against specified national and local performance indicators and measures of success.

6.2 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.

6.3 Members were given the opportunity to discuss the document and in response to Members' questions, the following information was confirmed:

- 6.4 A collaborative procurement process is in place across Wales for the purchase of appliances and light vehicles and this is overseen by the NIC.
- 6.5 Firefighters apprenticeship scheme – the first cohort of apprentices are in place and progressing well through the apprenticeship programme. In terms of extending the programme, it was noted that there are imminent changes to the apprenticeship programme across the UK and therefore it is uncertain how it will work in future. The CFO and Clerk will meet separately to discuss the impact of the changes on the apprenticeship scheme in NWFRS.
- 6.6 Members were pleased to note that North Wales is among the top performers in terms of delivering HSCs and it is important that the prevention message continues to be at the fore of all Service activity. Members also praised the Control Room operatives for being able to identify the malicious false alarms in line with the call challenge policy that is in place.
- 6.7 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) approve the draft assessment of the Authority’s performance in 2015-16 for publication before the statutory deadline of 31 October 2016;**
  - (ii) note that a summary leaflet will also be produced which will be published before the end of the calendar year.**

## 7 IMPROVEMENT AND WELLBEING OBJECTIVES 2017-18 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Fire Officer introduced the report which asked Members to approve the contents of the draft Improvement and Wellbeing Objectives 2017-18 consultation document.
- 7.2 Having received Members' approval for the four draft improvement and wellbeing objectives at the June 2016 meeting, a draft consultation document has been produced and explains the Authority's proposed objectives and invites responses by 12 December 2016. Members congratulated the author for producing a document that is easy to understand and in layman's terms.
- 7.3 The Corporate Communications Manager explained the communication strategy to Members. It was noted that the full document and an executive summary will be available on the website and circulated to a large number of organisations. The consultation will be publicised via social media and people will be able to complete a short survey online. Officers are working with partner organisations and they will be promoting and highlighting each others' consultations over the next few months.
- 7.4 Members' participation in the promotion of the consultation is essential in order for their fellow councillors to better understand the reasoning behind the objectives which in turn will assist with councils' budget discussions when they are presented with the FRA's contribution requests. Members were also asked to promote and encourage the public to take part in the consultation.
- 7.5 **RESOLVED to approve the contents of the draft document, “Affordable fire and rescue services for North Wales”, for public consultation.**

## 8 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2015-16

- 8.1 The Chief Fire Officer presented the report which asked Members to approve the audited statement of accounts for 2015-16 and the annual governance statement. Members had also received a copy of the of Wales Audit Office's audit of financial statements report and Amanda Hughes from WAO was in attendance to presents its findings to Members.
- 8.2 Ms Hughes explained that the WAO was now responsible for auditing the financial aspects of NWFRA in addition to the performance aspects. Ms Hughes confirmed that the Auditor General intended to issue an unqualified audit report on the financial statements and then went on to give Members a precis of the work undertaken during the audit and the recommendations arising from the financial audit work for 2015-16 around improving the asset register processes.
- 8.3 Cllr A M Jones confirmed that the Audit Committee had considered the statement of accounts and the audit of financial statements report in detail at its meeting on 12 September 2016. Although the Audit Committee had no major observations nor could find any major risks in the report, Members had expressed concern about the issues identified with the asset register; reassurance had been provided that officers were already starting to implement changes as a result of the recommendations made and therefore the Audit Committee was content to recommend that the Authority approve the statement of accounts.
- 8.4 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) approve the audited statement of accounts for 2015-16;**
  - (ii) note that the findings from the audit of financial statements report will be fully implemented.**

## 9 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2016-17

- 9.1 The CFO presented the report, which gave an estimated provisional outturn for the financial year 2016-17, and explained the variances to various budget headings.
- 9.2 Currently, the indications are that there will be no underspend and £484,320 of reserves will be needed to support the budget for 2016/17. During the budget setting process it was estimated that £760,417 of reserves would be required in order to set a balanced budget. 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.
- 9.3 It was noted that following the audit of the statement of accounts, the provisional outturn report now includes information about the grants that have been awarded to the Authority for the current financial year in order for members to be fully informed of the financial position of the Authority. Members were reminded of the Authority's agreed position on grant funded

activities that should the grant funding cease the activity will also cease. In 2015-16 due to a 20% reduction in the grant funding for community safety activities, the Authority had prioritised its preferences in order to be able to continue with the Phoenix project and the work of the arson reduction team and Members once again reiterated their support for these projects.

9.4 **RESOLVED to note the financial position of the Authority.**

10 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

10.1 The CFO presented the report which provided 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 12 September 2016 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.

10.2 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) approve the amended prudential indicators;**
- (ii) note the current counterparties;**
- (iii) note the new loans.**

11 STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT (REPORTING PERIOD 2015-2016)

11.1 ACFO Simmons presented the report which sought members' approval for the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report (reporting period 2015-2016) in response to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

11.2 The fourth annual report outlined progress towards achieving each of the Authority's equality objectives and the arrangements in place to identify and collect relevant information.

11.3 Members were given the opportunity to ask questions about the report and queried whether there had been an increase in incidents targeting ethnic minorities in recent months; it was explained that any criminal and fire-related incidents would be dealt with by the police who would work closely with the Arson Reduction Team. Members reiterated the Authority's support towards the prevention of arson incidents and indicated that they would welcome regular updates on the arson reduction work undertaken.

11.4 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) note the content of the report;**
- (ii) approve the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2015-2016 for publication on the Service's website.**

12 APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR THE POST OF TREASURER

12.1 The Chief Fire Officer presented the report which updated members as to the arrangements for the recruitment to the vacant post of Treasurer.

12.2 The report outlined the appointment process and it was noted that it would be a member-appointment and therefore an appointments Committee needs to be convened with one Executive Panel member to represent each local authority.

12.3 Having discussed the arrangements and dates involved, it was **RESOLVED to approve the proposed process as outlined in the report.**

13 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

13.1 The Chief Fire Officer presented the report which sought members' approval for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's in year capital adjustments in line with project demands, this will include mid-year virements of capital to cover funding for some transformational projects.

13.2 Previous capital programme reports had focused on the Authority's estates programme and now that the programme was drawing to a close, it was considered a timely opportunity to draw members' attention to other aspects of the capital programme. Details of the virements required are as follows:

13.3 Command and control project - the command and control system is to be replaced in preparation for the emergency services mobile communication programme (ESMCP). Initial project costs were estimated to be £600k; however, following the tender process and signing of the supplier contract, costs are in the region of £1.2m. Current capital allocated to the project is £630k. To fund part of the additional costs it is proposed to vire £477,633 from the Fleet capital programme. This figure was allocated towards funding for an aerial appliance which is not yet needed. A further injection of capital amounting to £92k will be required during the 2016-17 financial year.

13.4 Breathing apparatus set replacement - in 2015 the Service completed two projects ahead of schedule; the all-Wales procurement of replacement fire helmets and hose. This released capital sums of £83,613 and £18,029 respectively. It is recommended that the capital allocated against these projects is vired to the breathing apparatus set replacement programme, as the budget currently allocated to the project is insufficient.

13.5 Tri-service collaboration initiatives have placed extra demands on the requirement for appropriate vehicles for both the wholetime duty system (WDS) rural firefighter and the co-responding pilot. In order to support these initiatives, it is recommended that £150k be vired from the special appliance to capital provisions.

13.6 **RESOLVED to note the contents of the report and approve the requested movements of capital funds as follows:**

Amount	Vired from	Vired to
£477,633	Fleet	Command and control project
£101,642	Replacement of fire helmets and hose	Breathing apparatus set replacement
£150,000	Special appliance	Capital provisions for tri-service collaboration project, co-responding pilot and the WDS rural firefighter system.

14 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

14.1 The minutes of the Executive Panel meeting held on 18 July 2016 were submitted for information.

14.2 **RESOLVED to note the minutes for information.**