

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 21 March 2016 at Ynys Môn County Borough Council Chamber, Llangefni. Meeting commenced at 10.30am.

PRESENT

Councillor

M LI Davies (Chair)
P R Lewis (Deputy Chair)
L W Davies
A Evans
J G Evans
A M Jones
R O Jones
D Macrae
D J Miles
W R Owen
W T Owen
R E Parry
J R Skelland
A Tansley
W O Thomas

Representing

Denbighshire County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Anglesey County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Anglesey County Council
Gwynedd Council
Anglesey County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Gwynedd Council
Gwynedd Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Wrexham County Borough 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); G Owens (Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer); D Docx (Deputy Chief Fire Officer and Interim Treasurer); R Simmons and R Fairhead (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); G W Griffiths (Senior Training and Development Manager); S Millington (Senior Fire Safety Manager); K Roberts (Senior Operations Manager); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); S Forrest (Accountant, Treasurer's Department, Conwy County Borough Council); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer); S Jones (Member Liaison Assistant).

APOLOGIES

R Davies	Denbighshire County Council
A I Dunbar	Flintshire County Council
B Dunn	Flintshire County Council
T A Edwards	Wrexham County Borough Council
C Hughes	Gwynedd Council
G Lowe	Wrexham County Borough Council
H McGuill	Flintshire County Council
M A Reece	Flintshire County Council
W P Shotton	Flintshire County Council
D Taylor	Wrexham County Borough Council
G G Williams	Gwynedd Council

At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair paid tribute to Cllr Peter Owen from Denbighshire County Council who sadly passed away on 12 March. All those present observed a minute's silence in memory of Cllr Owen.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2015 AND 25 JANUARY 2016

2.1 The minutes of the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 14 December 2015 were submitted for approval.

2.2 The minutes of the extraordinary Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 25 January 2016 were submitted for approval.

2.2 **RESOLVED to approve minutes of both meetings as a true and correct record.**

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 There were no matters arising.

3.2 **RESOLVED to note the update.**

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 Ll Davies and Cllr P R Lewis in their roles of Chair and Deputy Chair of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority between December 2015 and March 2016.

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

6 IMPROVEMENT AND RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2016-17

6.1 The DCFO presented the draft Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan 2016-17 to members for approval prior to publication.

6.2 Members had been involved in the preparation work during 2015 looking at risks and formulating objectives and these had had been consulted upon publicly and used for budget setting purposes. The outcome of the consultation had been discussed at the Executive Panel meeting on 8 February 2016 and members had confirmed the improvement objectives for 2016-17.

6.3 **RESOLVED to approve the final draft of the Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan 2016-17 for publication on the Authority's website before the end of March 2016.**

7 RESERVES STRATEGY

7.1 The Interim Treasurer presented the reserves strategy, which will be used as a basis for managing the Fire and Rescue Authority's usable reserves, for Members' approval. The report contained information on the Authority's reserves, together with background on the appropriate management of reserves in a local authority context.

7.2 As part of the medium term financial plan, approved at the extraordinary meeting in January 2016, a reserves strategy has been created. The strategy details how the Authority will hold reserves and that the reporting of reserves will be incorporated in the statement of accounts in line with the accounting codes of practice applicable to the Authority; regular updates will be provided to Members throughout the year. Members were again reminded that reserves cannot be used to fund a general deficit in the net revenue budget as this would represent an unsustainable financial position.

7.3 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) note the content of the report in respect of the reserves held by authorities;**
- (ii) approve the strategy as a basis for managing the Fire and Rescue Authority's usable reserves.**

8 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2015-2016

8.1 The Interim Treasurer presented the report which informed Members about the estimated provisional outturn for the financial year 2015-16. It was noted that current indications are that there will be an underspend of £35,298, however, it is possible that this will change before 31 March 2016.

8.2 The Interim Treasurer explained that in order to reduce costs in future years it had been decided to fund some of the capital expenditure on short term assets, in particular light vehicles and equipment for fleet, through a contribution from revenue. The savings realised will be on debt repayment and borrowing costs. Members had previously agreed to use any underspend to fund the capital programme as part of the previous outturn report, albeit at a lower amount.

8.3 **RESOLVED to note the minor underspend and agree in principle to set aside any additional underspends to fund the capital programme.**

9 PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS, TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY

9.1 Members were presented with the Prudential Indicators, Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2016/17. The Interim Treasurer explained that the Audit Committee has delegated power to review these documents in finer detail and this had been done at its meeting on 25 January 2016.

- 9.2 The Audit Committee had discussed the Reverse Repurchase Agreements (Repos) that had been added to the counterparty list, following advice from the Treasury Consultants, in order to diversify the investment portfolio. However, Members expressed concern over the use of Repos and would recommend that they should not be used at this time until feedback has been provided with regards their use by Conwy County Borough Council. The Audit Committee had no further observations nor could find any major risks in the report and would recommend it be approved by the Authority. Cllr Skelland as Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that the report had been discussed with the aid of a detailed presentation expertly delivered by Sandra Forrest.
- 9.3 **RESOLVED to approve each of the four key elements of the report and the recommendations contained therein**
- (i) **a list of prudential indicators as required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities;**
 - (ii) **the Treasury Management Strategy outlining the strategy to be followed regarding short and long-term borrowing for 2016/17 in accordance with the CIPFA code of Practice on Treasury Management;**
 - (iii) **the strategy to be followed regarding the investment of Fire and Rescue Authority funds;**
 - (iv) **Minimum Revenue Provision Statement.**
- 10 STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN THE EQUALITY ACT 2010 (STATUTORY DUTIES) (WALES) REGULATIONS 2011
- 10.1 The report sought Members' approval for the second Strategic Equality Plan in response to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.
- 10.2 ACFO Simmons led Members through the report and explained the process that had been undertaken to draw up the plan including cross sector joint working across North Wales. It was noted that the plan encourages everyone to think about the different needs of communities across North Wales. The Strategic Equality Plan sets out the Authority's ongoing commitment to ensuring respect and fairness for the residents, staff members and all visitors to the North Wales area. It was also noted that the plan will be publicised and promoted both internally and externally to raise awareness of the ongoing work on equalities. Cllr Anne Evans congratulated the officers on such an excellent report.
- 10.3 **RESOLVED to note the content of the report and approve the Strategic Equality Plan for publication.**

11 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

11.1 The report sought members' approval for the pay policy statement for 2016/17.

11.2 The DCFO explained that the statement contained the same information as the one presented to the Authority for 2015/16, with updated appendices detailing salary matrix for the chief officers' and NJC approved salary for the roles of wholetime firefighter, retained duty system firefighter, control officers and local government officers.

11.3 **RESOLVED to approve the pay policy statement for the coming financial year 2016/17.**

12 DELEGATION OF POWERS TO THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

12.1 The Clerk presented the report which asked Members to confirm delegations to the Chief Fire Officer. The report had been considered by the Executive Panel and recommended for Authority approval.

12.2 It was noted that the powers of officers are delegated by the Fire and Rescue Authority. The delegation of powers takes place by virtue of Members approving the scheme. The existing scheme of delegation had been reviewed, and updated where necessary, by the Clerk and CFO.

12.3 **RESOLVED to approve the scheme of delegation of powers.**

13 NWFRA REPRESENTATION ON PUBLIC SERVICES BOARDS

13.1 The Clerk introduced the report which proposed that the Chief Fire Officer as North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's representative on North Wales Public Services Boards.

13.2 With effect from 1 April 2016, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 will establish a statutory board, known as a Public Services Board (PSB), in each local authority area in Wales. There will be four statutory members of PSBs - local authority, the local health board, the fire and rescue authority and Natural Resources Wales. All four must be in attendance for a meeting to be quorate. The CFO explained that in the inaugural period of the newly-formed PSBs he would represent NWFRA in order to provide a consistent approach across North Wales.

13.3 **RESOLVED to nominate the Chief Fire Officer to represent North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority on the North Wales Public Services Boards. Members recognised that this would ensure a consistent approach from the most senior officer of the Service.**

14 REVIEW OF TREASURER'S STATUTORY APPOINTMENT AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

14.1 The report informed Members of the findings of the review into the service level agreement for the provision of a Treasurer to the Fire and Rescue Authority and the proposed arrangements for an appointment to that statutory post.

- 14.2 Through the national issues committee (NIC) the arrangements of the other two fire and rescue authorities in Wales have been examined. Having compared the arrangements with those in place for North Wales FRA, it is proposed that North Wales FRA continues with its own arrangements which provide the benefits of both models; that is to have an independent Treasurer contracted for 12 days per year at a cost of £7,164 working with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, who is a qualified accountant. It was noted that a panel of Authority Members will be involved in the appointments process to take place in the new financial year.
- 14.3 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) **note the content of the report and approve the proposed arrangements for the provision of a Treasurer to the Fire and Rescue Authority;**
- (ii) **approve the appointment process, as outlined in the report.**
- 15 THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
- 15.1 The Clerk presented the annual report of the Standards Committee to members.
- 15.2 **RESOLVED to note the Standards Committee's annual report.**
- 16 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE
- 16.1 The Clerk introduced the report which proposed that Antony Young be reappointed as an independent member to the Authority's Standards Committee for a further period of four years. Mr Young has served one term of four years and is eligible for reappointment for a maximum of one further term of up to four years. Mr Young has indicated that he is willing to be reappointed.
- 16.2 **RESOLVED to reappoint Antony Young as an independent member of the Standards Committee with effect from April 2016 for a term of four years.**
- 17 TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF NWFRA
- 17.1 Members were informed that the Authority will be commemorating its twentieth anniversary at the June 2016 annual Authority meeting.
- 17.2 **RESOLVED to note the Authority's anniversary and that a photograph will be taken to commemorate the occasion at the annual meeting in June.**
- 18 MINUTES OF MEETINGS
- 18.1 The minutes of the following meetings were submitted for information:
- Standards Committee meeting held on 14 January 2016
 - Audit Committee meeting held on 25 January 2016
 - Executive Panel meeting held on 8 February 2016.
- 18.2 **RESOLVED to note the minutes for information.**