

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2022 AT 1000 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 8 OR REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

33. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
S Bradwick (Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
P Drake (Deputy Chair)		Vale of Glamorgan
D Ali		Cardiff
I Buckley		Vale of Glamorgan
P Ford		Bridgend
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
M Hughes		Bridgend
A Hussey		Caerphilly
D Isaac		Merthyr Tydfil
S McConnel		Monmouthshire
S Melbourne		Cardiff
J Morgan		Blaenau Gwent
M Al-Nuaimi		Newport
D Naughton		Cardiff
D Parkin		Rhondda Cynon Taff
M Powell		Monmouthshire
A Roberts		Rhondda Cynon Taff
T Watkins		Newport
C Wright		Caerphilly

APOLOGIES:

A Best		Torfaen
K Carr		Cardiff
C Elsbury		Caerphilly
S Evans		Torfaen
B Proctor		Cardiff
ACFO R Prendergast		Director of Tech Services

ABSENT:

OFFICERS PRESENT:- CFO H Jakeway, T/ACFO N Williams – Director of Technical Services, 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, Mrs L Mullan – T/Head of Finance, Procurement & Property, T/AM C Hadfield – Head of Risk Reduction, Mr C Rigby – Wales Audit Officer

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

35. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **ITV INVESTIGATION AND NEWS REPORT**

The Chair brought Members attention to the ITV investigation and News reports which were first aired on Monday, 12 December. He stressed that all Members were appalled by the news report and what was heard for the first time from the two victims. The Chief Fire Officer had issued an unreserved public apology to the victims and had initiated an independent review into the culture of the Service, its disciplinary procedures, and historic disciplinary cases.

The Chair stressed that he wished to record that the Chief Fire Officer had the full support of all the Senior Members of the Fire & Rescue Authority.

- **NOTIFICATION OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

The Chair informed Members that formal notification had been received from the Fire Brigades Union that the ballot for industrial action commenced on 5 December, 2022 and would run until 30 January, 2023.

Members were advised that following the meeting the Chief Fire Officer would provide an update.

With reference to receiving emails from Members querying why the Service was advertising for Auxiliary Firefighters, the Chair stressed that it was the Authority's statutory duty and legal

requirement to provide fire cover across the whole area, including periods of Industrial Action.

- **COUNCILLOR STEVE EVANS**

On behalf of all Members, the Chair expressed sympathy and condolences to the Chair of the Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee, Councillor Steve Evans, and his family, on the recent passing of his mother.

- **COUNCILLOR SUE MALSON**

As Councillor Sue Malson had recently stood down from the Fire Authority, the Chair took the opportunity to thank her for her services during her time as a Member.

- **NEW MEMBER – COUNCILLOR ALFIE BEST**

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome new Member, Councillor Alfie Best to the Fire & Rescue Authority who was representing Torfaen County Borough Council.

- **APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES**

The Chair advised Members of the appointment of Mr Geraint Thomas to Assistant Chief Officer, Director of Corporate Services, following a rigorous recruitment process. On behalf of Members the Chair congratulated Geraint and wished him all the very best in his new role.

- **GREEN BOOK PAY AWARD**

The Chair informed Members that the pay award for green Book staff had been agreed with an annual settlement of £1,925 for all spinal points, plus an extra one day's annual leave from April 2023, and a commitment to review allowances.

- **PASSING OUT PARADE**

The Chair was pleased to report that on 1 December, 2022, he had the pleasure of attending the Passing Out Parade of the Service's newest recruits. He advised it was a pleasure to welcome families and guests, and it was extremely pleasing to see seven female firefighters out of 22 new recruits.

- **CAROL SERVICE**

Along with the Deputy Chair, the Chair informed Members that they had the pleasure of attending the Emergency Services' Carol Service on 7 December, at Llandaff Cathedral. The Chair highlighted that it was a wonderful service which was well attended, and he took the opportunity to thank SM Richie Smart for organising the fantastic event.

- **MEETING WITH DEPUTY MINISTER**

The Chair informed Members that along with the Deputy Chair he had met with the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership to discuss ongoing relations, as well as a further meeting to discuss recent events.

- **BUDGET MEETINGS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

The Chair informed Members and he and the Chief Fire Officer continued to deliver updates to the Local Authority Council meetings, all of which had been fairly well received in terms of the services provided and the predicted financial settlements for the Fire Authority.

- **MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

The Chair stressed that in light of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales report, which was on the agenda, he would like to remind Members of the expectation of a minimum of 22 days commitment per annum for their Fire Authority roles. Therefore, attendance at meetings was an essential requirement to enable the function of the Fire Authority to be fulfilled.

He also reminded to Members to send their apologies if they were unable to attend a meeting.

36. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

- Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on Monday, 26 September 2022, subject to the following amendment in Minute No. 30.2.5 'Independent Pay Review – Principal Officers Remuneration':- *'It was agreed that a review would be carried out in two years'*

- Local Pension Board meeting held on Monday, 4 July, 2022
- HR & Equalities Committee meeting held on Monday, 18 July, 2022
- Scrutiny Group meeting held on Friday, 23 September, 2022
- Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee meeting held on Monday, 10 October, 2022
- Standards Committee meeting held on Monday, 7 February, 2022
- Finance, Asset, Performance Management Scrutiny Group meeting held on Monday, 4 April, 2022

37. UPDATE ON ACTIONS

The ACO People 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.

The Chief Fire Officer provided Members with a brief update on outstanding action 22/23-22.1.4.

The Chair and Deputy Chair also confirmed that they had put their views and concerns across to the Deputy Minister on the Thematic Review – ‘Broadening the Role of Firefighters in Wales’.

38. REPORTS FOR DECISION

38.1. THEMATIC REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL TRAINING WITHIN THE WELSH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES – OCTOBER 2022

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report which provided Members with an overview of the Thematic Review of Operational Training produced by the Welsh Government’s Fire Adviser.

The Chair informed Members that he had discussed with the Deputy Minister his concerns regarding the significant financial impact of possibly converting On-Call stations to Wholetime

stations, and the costs which would need to be covered by each of the ten Unitary Authorities.

The Chief Fire Officer provided Members with a brief overview of the changes which were made during the Fire Cover Review and the full Risk Assessment which had been carried out at that time.

Following a question and answer session on possible changes, the Chief Fire Officer assured Members that in such circumstances the Service would always adhere to the National Operational Guidance, and a Gap Analysis would be carried out

RESOLVED THAT

- 38.1.1 Members agreed to acknowledge the thematic review of the Fire Adviser into the Welsh Fire & Rescue Services' operational training.
- 38.1.2 Members agreed to note the report and the Fire Adviser's thematic review and recommendations.
- 38.1.3 Following a request by Members, Officers agreed to provide a follow up report once the Service review had been completed.

38.2 REVENUE AND CAPITAL PROPOSED BUDGET FOR CONSULTATION

The T/Head of Finance presented a report to update Members on preparations for the setting of the 2023/2024 budget and to seek approval for the draft budget for consultation.

The report included the latest projections based on the Authority's plans and strategies as informed by the general financial and operational environment in which services are provided.

The presented report built on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) report that was considered by the Fire & Rescue Authority in September 2022, and the work of the Finance Audit & Performance Management Committee and Scrutiny Group since that date.

The report now included the likely impact of population projections flowing from the data underpinning the Local Government Settlement which formed the basis of the distribution of the Fire Contributions budget.

The FAPM Committee considered the detail of the budget and the further work undertaken by Officers of the Service on 5 December, 2022, as requested by Members.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a question and answer session on Grants received from the Welsh Government, Members agreed the recommended draft budget as the basis of consultation.

38.3 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Monitoring Officer informed Members that the purpose of the presented report was to recommend and seek Members' approval of the changes to the Authority's Constitution to enable the Authority to comply with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act 2021 and associated statutory guidance.

The changes to the Constitution included the establishment of a Scrutiny Committee to replace the existing scrutiny working group. There was also a greater emphasis on public participation and included a new Multi-Location Meetings Policy. The aim of the policy was to outline the arrangements in place which would ensure that Authority meetings could be held regardless of where participants were situated. This would enable persons not in the same location to attend meetings. Such meetings were referred to as multi-location meetings and often termed hybrid meetings.

The Monitoring Officer took the opportunity to record his thanks and appreciation to the Deputy Monitoring Officer for all her hard work in helping to carry out a full review of the Constitution.

RESOLVED THAT

38.3.1 Following lengthy discussion and a request by Members, it was agreed that the implementation of changes to the Constitution be delayed until the new

Municipal Year to ensure work on the scheme of delegations and the Constitution guide was completed.

- 38.3.2 Members agreed to approve the creation of a formal Scrutiny Committee as outlined in Paragraph 2.3 which would become fully effective in the new Municipal Year.

39. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

39.1 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID TERM REVIEW REPORT 2022/2023

The T/Head of Finance informed Members that the Treasury Management Mid-Term Review Report provided an update on the Authority's treasury activities for the period 1 April-30 September 2022.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the report and treasury activity for the period 1 April-30 September 2022.

39.2 BUSINESS PLAN ACTIONS REPORT – HEALTH CHECK 2022/2023 QUARTER 2 (JULY-SEPT 2022)

The ACO Corporate Services and T/Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented to Members the Business Plan Actions Report – Health Check 2022-2023 Quarter 2 (July-September 2022).

RESOLVED THAT

- 19.3.1 Following a lengthy question and answer session on issues relating to malicious fire calls and the use of social media to send out messages to local communities which provided advice and tips on fuel poverty, Members agreed to note the information contained within the report on the Business Plan Actions - Health Check 2022-2023 Quarter 2.
- 19.3.2 Following a request by Members to receive further narrative and information on data which related to their individual Unitary Authority, the Monitoring Officer agreed to send Members contact details of their local

Group Manager, and to provide a wider presentation at the next Fire Authority meeting.

- 19.3.3 With reference to the recent tragic incident where four boys died after falling through the ice on a lake in Solihull, it was agreed to send a letter to the Chief Fire Officer of West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service, to thank the local firefighters who bravely tried to save the boys.

39.3 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The ACO Corporate Services presented a report which brought Members' attention to the relevant sections of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report that related to payments to Members of Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the extract of the Independent Remuneration Panel's Draft Annual Report, attached to the report at Appendix 1, which provided details of payments to Members of Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities,

39.4 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.

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

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