

## **SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

### **MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY HELD ON MONDAY 17 JULY 2023 AT 1030 HRS IN MEETING ROOMS 8 OR REMOTELY VIA TEAMS**

#### **21. PRESENT:**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Authority</b>
S Bradwick (Chair)	Rhondda Cynon Taff
P Drake (Deputy Chair)	Vale of Glamorgan
D Ali	Cardiff
A Best	Torfaen
K Carr	Cardiff
S Evans	Torfaen
P Ford	Bridgend
G Holmes	Rhondda Cynon Taff
M Hughes	Bridgend
J Morgan	Blaenau Gwent
D Naughton	Cardiff
M Al-Nuaimi	Newport
M Powell	Monmouthshire
B Proctor	Cardiff
A Roberts	Rhondda Cynon Taff
C Wright	Caerphilly
L Wright	Monmouthshire

#### **APOLOGIES:**

I Buckley	Vale of Glamorgan
D Isaac	Merthyr Tydfil
S-E Melbourne	Cardiff
T Watkins	Newport
G Williams	Rhondda Cynon Taff
ACFO R Prendergast	Director of Technical Services
ACO A Reed	Director of People Services

#### **ABSENT:**

C Elsbury	Caerphilly
A Hussey	Caerphilly

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** CFO H Jakeway, Temp DCFO D Rose - Director of Service Delivery, Temp ACFO G Davies – Director of Technical Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, ACO G Thomas – Director of Corporate Services & Monitoring Officer, Mrs S Watkins – Head of Corporate Support & Deputy Monitoring Officer, Mrs Lisa Shroll – Head of People Services, GM S O’Connell – Operations Management Team

## **22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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

Councillors Evans and Morgan also declared a personal interest as a Member of the Gwent Public Service Board.

## **23. CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **WELCOME ADDRESS**

The Chair wished to extend a special warm welcome to Councillor Powell who had returned to the Fire & Rescue Authority following a short stay in hospital.

- **REAL LIVING WAGE ACCREDITATION**

The Chair was pleased to announce that the Service had received formal confirmation that they had been awarded the accreditation as a Real Living Wage employer. The Real Living Wage was based on the cost of living and was higher than the National Minimum Wage, which was currently set at £10.90 per hour.

- **REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT 1974**

The Chair informed Members that through a great deal of work and perseverance the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) had secured an amendment to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, which meant that Fire & Rescue Services would now be able to access higher levels of Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks for all staff that the Service employs. The Service was

considering the implications of this legislative change and would be engaging with Representative Body Officials to discuss the implementation of this essential legislation.

- **SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP FORUM FOR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES**

The Chair was pleased to report that he and the Chief Fire Officer had a positive meeting with the Deputy Minister and colleagues from the other two Welsh Fire Services.

The Chief Fire Officer also provided Members with a brief overview of the Social Partnership Forum meeting. He reported that the meeting covered an in depth agenda which included informative presentations and reports on key topics such as the risks and measures in place to deal with contaminants, as well as 'Broadening the Role of the Firefighter'.

- **RETIREMENT OF ACFO RICHARD PRENDERGAST**

As ACFO Richard Prendergast had been on an extended period of sick leave, the Chair was sad to inform Members that the Independent Registered Medical Practitioner had advised that his ongoing health would prevent him from returning to his fulltime employment. ACFO Prendergast's retirement would commence on 12 September, and the Chief Fire Officer would provide a report at September's Fire Authority meeting on the process to appoint a substantive replacement. On behalf of Members, the Chair took the opportunity to thank ACFO Prendergast for his service and advice over the years, and to wish him well for the future.

- **NEW APPOINTMENT**

The Chair took the opportunity to extend a warm welcome to Mrs Lisa Shroll into the Service as the new Head of People Services, following her success at the recent appointment panel process.

- **FIRE CADET PASSING OUR PARADES**

The Chair took the opportunity to thank all Members who had supported the recent Passing Out Parades for the Fire Cadets across the Service. The events had been very successful, and the

continued support of Members and Officers was appreciated by the proud individuals and their families.

- **FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBERS INDUCTION**

The Chair advised that an induction session had been arranged for new Members on the morning of 3 August 2023. If any Members who were unable to attend such a session but would like to participate, then they should contact Scott Morris, Members Service Officer, or ACO Geraint Thomas, Director of Corporate Services, who would be pleased to provide the necessary details.

- **IDRP TRAINING**

The Chair informed Members that Ms Kim Jeal, HR Manager, would be facilitating a training session for Members on the Service's Internal Dispute Resolution Procedures (IDRP) for Firefighter Pensions disputes, as there would be occasions when Members would be required to sit on an IDRP panel. A date for the training would be arranged once sufficient names had been received, and the Chair urged Members to attend if possible.

- **GRENFELL TOWER FIRE INCIDENT**

Following a query raised by Councillor Holmes, the Chief Fire Officer provided Members with a brief update on the Grenfell Public Inquiry and the specific timelines for publication of the report.

- **TRAGIC DEATH OF TWO CANADIAN FIREFIGHTERS**

On behalf of Members and Officers, the Chair took the opportunity to pay tribute to the two Firefighters who had tragically lost their lives in Canada as the country battled its worst season of wildfires on record.

## **24. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

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

- Annual General Meeting held on 12 June 2023

- Fire & Rescue Authority Meeting held on 27 March 2023
- HR & Equalities Committee held on 27 February, 2023
- Local Pension Board Committee held on 23 January, 2023

## **25. UPDATE ON ACTIONS**

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

Following a query raised on the 'Real Living Wage Accreditation', the Monitoring Officer assured Members that the ACO People Services would present a Briefing Note at a later date, which would include additional information on key areas such as branding etc.

## **26. REPORTS FOR DECISION**

### **26.1. REPORT ON STRATEGIC THEMES AND PROPOSED OBJECTIVES 2024/2025**

The Head of Corporate Support presented a report for Members to approve the proposed objectives for 2024/2025 to deliver the Service's long-term Strategic Themes for publication in the Service's Annual Improvement Plan Stage 2 for formal consultation.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

26.1.1 Following lengthy discussion on concerns with electric chargers, and the lack of communication regarding sustainability, Councillor Carr proposed to amend the wording on two of the themes as follows:-

- Involving,
- Protecting and enhancing our environment.

26.1.2 Members agreed to approve the proposed Strategic Themes and Objectives set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report, for engagement events and publication in the 'Consultation Document' – Stage 2 of the Annual

Improvement Plan on the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service's internet site by 31 October, 2023.

- 26.1.3 Members agreed to approve delegation to the Director of Corporate Services and Head of Corporate Support to review and refine the proposed Objectives as necessary.

## **26.2 FIRE FALSE ALARM REDUCTION**

Group Manager O'Connell presented a report which provided the Audit Wales review into the reduction of fire false alarms in South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 26.2.1 Members agreed to approve the responses to the recommendations set out within the Audit Wales report, attached at Appendix 2.
- 26.2.2 Members noted that a report on progress made by the Unwanted Fire Signals Working Group would be presented to the Scrutiny Committee within six months.
- 26.2.3 Following a question and answer session, Officers assured Members that they accepted the report and were positively focusing on the recommendations.

The Chair and Officers thanked Group Manager O'Connell and members of the Working Group for their hard work in dealing with the reduction of fire false alarms across South Wales.

## **26.3 TREORCHY FIRE & RESCUE STATION REFURBISHMENT PROCUREMENT**

The ACO Corporate Services informed Members that following a procurement tender process, the award of the contract for construction works required Fire & Rescue Authority approval in line with the Authority's constitution and contract standing orders.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

- 26.3.1 Members agreed that the contract for construction works at Treorchy Fire & Rescue Station be awarded to John Weaver (Contractors) Limited.
- 26.3.2 Following a question and answer session on the contract details and costs, Officers agreed to circulate copies of the drawings and layout plans to Members.
- 26.3.2 With reference to the completion of the project, Officers agreed to arrange for Members to visit the new Treorchy and Pontycymmer Fire Stations, as well as the Ogmere Vale Station Community Garden.

## **27. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**

### **27.1 EMERGENCY USE OF DELEGATED POWERS**

The ACO Corporate Services advised Members of the emergency use of delegated powers since the last Fire & Rescue Authority meeting in March 2023.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to note that the emergency use of delegated powers for the award of contracts to Trio Construction Limited for works at Pontycymmer, and Risk Management Partners Limited (RMP) for provision of insurance cover.

### **27.2 REPORT ON MANCHESTER ARENA INQUIRY VOLUME 2, SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE GAP ANALYSIS**

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that following the publication of Manchester Arena Inquiry (MAI) volume 2, South Wales Fire & Rescue Service was swift to review its current position against the Inquiry's recommendations and initiated a Gap Analysis. The South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Gap Analysis had considered the evidence heard by the Chair during the oral

hearings on the preparedness of each Emergency Service to respond to a marauding terrorist attack (MTA) and the events on 22 May 2017, after the explosion, in particular the emergency response and the experience of each person, victim, and the families of the deceased.

The purpose of the analysis would be to measure the findings within Volume 2 against the capabilities, training and equipment within South Wales Fire & Rescue Service, and the response to an MTA/Major incident.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

27.2.1 Members agreed to note that the report raised the awareness and offered assurance to the Fire Authority of the proactive training, awareness, and review of the Service's major incident and Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) procedures.

27.2.2 Members also agreed to note that the application and amendments being proposed within the MAIV2 and South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Gap Analysis would ensure that personnel and Service procedures were adequately prepared to meet the demands of such incidents.

27.2.3 Members agreed to note that the Service's Gap Analysis had identified 25 key areas specific to the organisation. The Gap Analysis had been drafted in a red, amber, and green status. The Gap Analysis had identified 13 areas which were green, 10 areas which were amber and 2 areas which were red. The Service had established a Task & Finish board who would address and resolve the areas of focus and development from the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Gap Analysis.

## **27.3 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER REPORT 2022/2023 Q4**

The Head of Corporate Support provided Members with an update on the Strategic Risk Register Report 2022/2023 Quarter 4.



## **RESOLVED THAT**

- 27.3.1 Members agreed to note the update on the Strategic Risk Register Report 2022/2023 Quarter 4.
- 27.3.2 Following discussion on Risk No. 222 Fire Safety Bill, Officers agreed to amend the terminology within the report.

## **27.4 BUSINESS PLAN ACTIONS REPORT 2022/2023 Q4**

The ACO Corporate Services and DCFO, provided Members with an update on the Business Plan Actions Report 2022/2023 Q4.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Following lengthy discussion on possible fire risks for elderly and vulnerable people within local areas, and referring them for Home Safety Checks, Members agreed to note the update on the Business Plan Actions Report 2022/2023 Quarter 4.

With reference to an ongoing mountain fire incident within the Cwmbach area, the Chair wished to record his thanks to the pilot of the Natural Resources Wales helicopter who had recently worked tirelessly to fetch and carry water to try and douse the fire.

## **27.5 WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS UPDATE**

On behalf of the ACO People Services, the Chief Fire Officer presented a report which provided Members with an overview of the current position with regards to meeting the legal requirements contained within the Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice issued to the Fire & Rescue Authority by the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30 September 2016.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

- 27.5.1 Members agreed to note the information contained within the report.
- 27.5.2 Following discussion on the extremely positive report, Officers agreed to put a formal request out to all

Members to appoint a Members Champion for the Welsh Language.

## **28. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024**

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.

## **29. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OF 2)**

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

- **FIRE AUTHORITY MEMBERS LIST FOR EACH FIRE STATION**

Following a request by the Chair, Officers agreed to ensure that an up to date list of Fire Authority & Rescue Members was circulated to each Fire & Rescue Station across the Service.

- **APPRECIATION AND THANKS FROM MEGAN GAITS**

The Chair and Chief Fire Officer took the opportunity to inform Members of a heart-warming story involving an elderly lady named Megan Gaits, who had been involved in a serious traffic incident in Aberaman during 2022, which had left her with life changing injuries.

As the incident had occurred during the ambulance strike, crews had managed to release her from the vehicle and had transported her to the hospital in a Service appliance.

To show her wholehearted appreciation and gratitude, Megan Gait had presented a large hamper to the whole crew and had met up with the Firefighter who had stayed with her at the scene for over one and a half hours whilst she was trapped in her vehicle.

The Chair and Chief Fire Officer advised that the presentation at the Fire Station was extremely emotional and heart-warming. Mrs Gait's had also donated a sum of money to the Firefighters Charity as a recognition of thanks, and they had subsequently been in touch to discuss publishing Mrs Gait's story in their magazine.

The Chair closed the meeting by wishing Members and Officers an enjoyable summer break.