

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 27 MARCH 2023 AT 1000 HRS AT CARDIFF GATE TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT CENTRE OR REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

50. PRESENT:

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

APOLOGIES:

C Elsbury	Caerphilly
K Carr	Cardiff
S Melbourne	Cardiff
D Naughton	Cardiff
B Proctor	Cardiff
ACFO R Prendergast	Director of Tech Servic
Mrs S Watkins	Deputy Monitoring Officer

OFFICERS PRESENT:- CFO H Jakeway, T/DCFO D Rose – Director of Service Delivery, T/ACFO G Davies – Director of Technical Services, ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, ACO G Thomas – Monitoring Officer & Director of Corporate Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, AM D Loader – Head of Operations, Ms S Ford – HR Manager, Ms L Mullan – T/Head of Finance & Procurement, Mr C Rigby – Audit Wales Officer

Following a request by the Chair, each attendee provided a formal introduction.

51. 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 declared a personal interest as Members of the Gwent Public Service Board.

52. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES**

The Chair informed Members that the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales had issued its final report which was effective from 1 April, 2023. The draft report was reported in December's Fire Authority meeting, and all other determinations set out in the 2023/2024 annual report remained valid. If Members required a copy of the full report they should contact ACO Geraint Thomas who would provide an electronic version.

- **GREY BOOK PAY AWARDS**

The Chair was pleased to announce that the NJC improved pay offer was accepted following a ballot of Fire Brigades Union members. The ballot result was announced on 6 March, 2023, with 96% in favour of accepting the improved pay offer of 7% backdated to July 2022 and 5% from July 2023.

- **INDUSTRIAL ACTION PLANNING**

The Chair wished to formally record his thanks to the outstanding work and planning which had been undertaken by Officers in preparation for potential industrial action. Thankfully the immediate threat had been avoided but the planning would stand the Service in good stead for any future scenarios to ensure continuity plans were in place to provide cover even on a restricted scale.

- **PASSING OF FORMER CHIEF FIRE OFFICER BRIAN FRASER**

It was with great sadness the Chair announced the passing of former Chief Fire Officer Brian Fraser after a long battle with illness. Brian had served as the Service's Chief Fire Officer from 2001 to 2009, and thoughts went out to his family, friends, and former colleagues at this sad time.

- **CHIEFS AND CHAIRS MEETING WITH DEPUTY MINISTER**

The Chair informed Members that along with the Chief Fire Officer, he had met with the Deputy Minister and colleagues from Mid & West and North Wales Fire & Rescue Services on 8 March, 2023. He advised that matters discussed centred around the two thematic reviews, which were being presented at the meeting, along with budgets for Fire Authorities for the next financial year. The impact of Welsh Government grants being removed or distributed in a different way was also discussed, and how this reflected negatively on Fire Authorities.

- **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF CULTURE REVIEW**

The Chair was pleased to announce that following a rigorous process, Fenella Morris KC had been appointed as Independent Chair of the Culture Review. Fenella was now in the process of putting together her team to undertake the review of the Service's culture and the disciplinary processes and historic discipline cases.

- **MALAWI ISAR DEPLOYMENT**

The Chair advised that following the recent devastating floods UK International Search & Rescue (UKISAR) had been deployed to assist the people of Malawi in recovering from the natural disaster. Once again the Service had supported this deployment with three personnel providing support during this vital work.

- **BRYNBACH PARC WATER EXERCISE – 14 FEBRUARY 2023**

The Chair informed Members that a multi-agency water rescue exercise took place on 14 February, 2023, at Brynbach Parc, Tredegar. Appliances from Ebbw Vale, Aberbargoed, Tredegar and Merthyr Tydfil Fire Stations were in attendance, together with the new Rescue Tender. The exercise was a test of a multi-agency response to water rescue of multiple casualties missing in a large body of water after dark. The Chair thanked Councillor Morgan for attending the exercise as an observer.

- **MEMBERS DEVELOPMENT DAY**

The Chair informed Members that he was pleased to see a good attendance at the meeting and looked forward to the Development Day which followed immediately after the close of the formal meeting.

- **PERSONAL MESSAGE OF THANKS**

Following a period of ill health, the Chair wished to personally thank Members and Officers for their kind messages of best wishes and support and was pleased to report that he was now fully recovered.

- **URGENT AGENDA ITEM - 'TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023/2024'**

The Chair informed Members that the 'Treasury Management Strategy' required formal approval by 31 March, 2023. However, due to an administrative error the report had been omitted from the current agenda and subsequent meeting papers. The Chair advised Members that he required a vote on whether they approved the inclusion of the report as an urgent item at today's meeting or to arrange a special remote meeting on Friday, 31 March, to consider the single item.

RESOLVED THAT

Members unanimously agreed that Officers could present the urgent report 'Treasury Management Strategy 2023/2024' at today's meeting.

53. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

- Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on Monday, 13 February 2023
- HR & Equalities Committee meeting held on Monday, 7 November, 2022
- Finance, Asset & Performance Management Committee meeting held on Monday, 5 December 2022.

With reference to the 'Independent Cultural Review', Officers noted that Councillor Buckley wished to volunteer as a member of the 'Authority Review Board' to provide ongoing support to the Independent Chairperson throughout the review.

54. UPDATE ON ACTIONS

The ACO People Services provided a brief 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 a brief update on the following outstanding actions:- 22/23-22.1.4 and 22/23-38.1.3.

55. REPORTS FOR DECISION

55.1. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024

The ACO People Services informed Members that South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority was required to publish a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year, which provided information for the following financial year.

The Fire & Rescue Authority at their meeting held on 6 February, 2012, adopted and published its first Pay Policy Statement. The Fire & Rescue Authority also determined that the HR & Equalities Committee should review the Pay Policy Statement and report to the full Committee. In 2014 Welsh Government issued new guidelines with further amendments which determined the contents

of the Pay Policy. The 2023/2024 Pay Policy Statement had been drafted for approval prior to being published on the Service's website. The statement was approved by the HR & Equalities Committee at its meeting on 27 February, 2023.

RESOLVED THAT

- 55.1.1 Members agreed to review South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024.
- 55.1.2 Members agreed to approve the 2023/2024 Pay Policy Statement to be published by 31 March 2023.
- 55.1.3 Following a query raised by Members, Officers confirmed that they would clarify the agreed timeline of reviewing Principal Officers Pay.

55.2 GENDER PAY GAP STATEMENT

The ACO People Services informed Members that under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities Regulations 2017 (the public sector regulations), all public authorities were required to publish Gender Pay Gap information by reporting the percentage differences in pay between their male and female employees.

Public authorities must publish the required information based on data captured on the snapshot date of 31 March within 12 months. Accordingly the deadline for publication was 30 March, 2023.

RESOLVED THAT

Members thanked Officers for the excellent report and agreed to approve the 2022 Gender Pay Gap report at Appendix 1 attached to the report, to be published by 30 March, 2023, and to note that further analysis was attached at Appendix 2.

55.3 REPORT ON STRATEGIC PLAN AND PRIORITY ACTIONS 2023/2024

The ACO Corporate Services presented a report for Members to approve the publication of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2020-30 Year 4 Update by 31 March, 2023.

RESOLVED THAT

55.3.1 Members agreed to note the outline of the content of the report that would be provided to the public in the Strategic Plan.

55.3.2 Members agreed to approve the publication of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2020-30 Year 4 Updated by 31 March, 2023.

55.4 PUBLIC SERVICE BOARDS WELLBEING PLANS

The ACO Corporate Services presented a report for Members to review and approve for publication by Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Cardiff, Gwent and Vale of Glamorgan Public Service Boards their Wellbeing Plans 2023-2028.

RESOLVED THAT

Following consideration, Members agreed to approve the publication of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Cardiff, and Vale of Glamorgan Public Service Boards' Wellbeing Plans.

55.5 REVISED SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS

The ACO Corporate Services informed Members that as part of the review of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Constitution, the revised Scheme of Delegations attached to the report at Appendix 1, was presented for Members' consideration and approval.

The ACO Corporate Services also wished to record his special thanks to Councillors Elsbury, Powell and Roberts, for all their hard work and support as Members of the Standing Orders Working Group.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to adopt the proposed updated Scheme of Delegations.

55.6 WELSH GOVERNMENT THEMATIC REVIEW – BROADENING THE ROLE OF FIREFIGHTERS

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report which provided Members with an overview of the Service's analysis of the Thematic Review of the Fire & Rescue Services' capacity and capability to assume a broader role for firefighters in Wales, produced by Mr Dan Stevens, Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser, Welsh Government.

The report also provided an update on the progress the Service had made since the publication of the thematic review and recommendations to the Authority.

RESOLVED THAT

- 55.6.1 Following lengthy discussion on the importance of negotiation and embracing social partnership, Members unanimously agreed to note the Welsh Government's preference to introduce a broader role for firefighters in Wales, but only after the Fire & Rescue Authorities had changed their current wholetime shift system.
- 55.6.2 Members unanimously agreed to endorse the findings of the Service's Working Group.
- 55.6.3 Members unanimously agreed to endorse the external scrutiny provided by Mr Alasdair Hay CBE QFSM.
- 55.6.4 Members unanimously agreed to note the national work that had commenced on New Roles through the National Joint Council.
- 55.6.5 Members unanimously agreed to endorse the recommendation of the Chief Fire Officer, that supports the introduction of broadening the role for firefighters in Wales through a social partnership approach and collective bargaining through the National Joint Council.
- 55.6.6 Members unanimously agreed to endorse the recommendation of the Chief Fire Officer not to change

the existing shift pattern in South Wales in advance of the introduction of broadening the role.

- 55.6.7 Members unanimously agreed to approve the Chair of the Authority to inform the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership of the decisions of the Authority on the thematic review.

55.7 WELSH GOVERNMENT THEMATIC REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL TRAINING WITHIN THE WELSH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

The Head of Operations informed Members that in October 2022 the Welsh Government's Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser published the 'Thematic Review of Operational Training within the Welsh Fire & Rescue Services'.

He advised that the Thematic Review focussed on the core and additional skills for firefighters and supervisory managers, and as such set out the findings of the review and provided 6 recommendations for the Welsh Fire & Rescue Services to consider.

RESOLVED THAT

- 55.7.1 Following a question and answer session on the meaning of 'unconstrained analysis' and whether any financial help would be available from Welsh Government, Members unanimously agreed to acknowledge the presented report and the commitment of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service in reviewing the Fire & Rescue Adviser's recommendations.

- 55.7.2 Members unanimously agreed to note the recommendations would be reviewed and acted upon where necessary through the normal training cycle review.

- 55.7.3 Officers agreed to keep Members updated of progress against the recommendations.

Members thanked Officers for their excellent comprehensive report.

55.8 STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN

The HR Manager advised that the purpose of the report was to present Members with South Wales Fire & Rescue Service's new Strategic Equality Plan for 2023-2026.

Members were advised that the current Equality Plan would end on 31 March, 2024, and due to the pace of change in both society as well as the working world, the Service had created a revised plan which reflected more closely the aims the Service wished to pursue to support its communities, stakeholders, and employees. The new focus increased the Service's opportunity to increase equity and inclusion across all interactions, and would be enacted on 1 April, 2023, and would run for a period of three years.

RESOLVED THAT

Members thanked Officers for the excellent report and agreed to approve the Strategic Equality Plan attached to the report.

55.9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023/2024

The Temp Head of Finance & Procurement presented a report to recommend that Members approve the Authority's Annual Treasury Management Strategy.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note and the following recommendations:-

- Regulatory changes and reporting impacts
- The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS)
- Capital Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy
- Borrowing Policy and Treasury Indicators/limits
- Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)
- The Treasurer to update strategies/policies as necessary.

56. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

56.1 JOB EVALUATION

The HR Manager informed Members that the presented report provided the outcomes of the Service's Job Evaluation process which commenced in 2020 and concluded early 2022 (delays were experienced due to Covid). The report contained details of the number of posts affected and subsequent impacts.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a question and answer session to ensure the Job Evaluation exercise was comprehensive and credible, Members agreed to note the implementation and completion of the Job Evaluation exercise as outlined within the report.

56.2 SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY SUMMARY REPORT OF ACTIVITY 2022/2023

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the presented report provided a summary of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service activity and the outcomes in terms of performance for the duration of the tenure of the current South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED THAT

56.2.1 Members agreed to note the contents of the report.

56.2.2 Members thanked Officers for the excellent report and appendices which they agreed to share with their individual Unitary Authority Leader in order to help to support Officers with ongoing dialogue when dealing with budgetary issues.

56.3 MEMBERS ATTENDANCE

The Monitoring Officer provided Members with a summary of Member attendance for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED THAT

56.3.1 Members agreed to note the summary of Member attendance for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year.

56.3.2 With reference to an inaccuracy highlighted by Councillor Wright, where she confirmed that she was in fact in attendance at the Fire Authority meeting on 19 December, 2022, Members agreed to check the presented data and to inform the Monitoring Officer or Members Support Officers if they wished to make any amendments.

56.4 FIRE AUTHORITY & COMMITTEE MEETING DATES FOR 2023/2024

The Monitoring Officer provided Members with details of the proposed cycle of Fire & Rescue Authority Committee meetings for the Municipal Year 2022/2023.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to approve the cycle of Fire & Rescue Authority Committee meetings for the Municipal Year 2023/2024.

56.5 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023

The Monitoring Officer provided a brief overview of the Forward Work Programme for 2022/2023 and highlighted that a small number of items would be deferred until the Annual General Meeting taking place in June.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note that the Forward Work Programme for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year was now complete.

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

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