

## SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

### MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20 DECEMBER 2021 AT 1030 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 8 OR REMOTELY VIA STARLEAF

#### 27. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
D T Davies (Chair)	1130 hrs	Caerphilly
S Bradwick (Deputy)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
L Brown		Monmouthshire
D De'ath		Cardiff
P Drake		Vale of Glamorgan
S Evans		Torfaen
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
A Hussey		Caerphilly
H Jarvie		Vale of Glamorgan
S Morgans		Rhondda Cynon Taff
D Naughton		Cardiff
A Roberts		Rhondda Cynon Taff
R Shaw		Bridgend
V Smith		Monmouthshire
D White		Bridgend
J Williams		Cardiff

#### APOLOGIES:

D Ali	Cardiff
M Colbran	Merthyr Tydfil
W Hodgins	Blaenau Gwent
C Elsbury	Caerphilly
S Malson	Torfaen
M Spencer	Newport
H Thomas	Newport
S Chapman	Monitoring Officer
ACFO D Rose	Director of Service Delivery

#### ABSENT:

A Lister	Cardiff
----------	---------

**OFFICERS PRESENT:-** CFO H Jakeway, Temporary DCFO R Prendergast – Director of Technical Services, ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, Temporary ACO G Thomas – Director of Corporate Services, Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer, Ms L Mullan – Temporary Head of Finance & Procurement, Ms K Jeal – HR Manager (Pensions), Matthew Brushett – Wales Audit Officer, Nick Selwyn – Wales Audit Officer

## **28. 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 items which related to New Inn Fire Station.

## **29. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **AWARD OF BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL**

The Chair was pleased to inform Members that on 24 November it was his great pleasure to attend the award ceremony of Group Manager Shaun Moody receiving his well-deserved British Empire Medal from the Lord Lieutenant of Mid Glamorgan, Mr Peter Vaughan.

Members were informed that Group Manager Moody had received his 'BEM' in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 2020 and was recognised for his outstanding contribution to search and rescue both internationally and locally. He had been hugely successful on the UK and World stage of vehicle extrication and has also led UK deployments to international countries hit by natural disasters, such as Nepal and New Zealand to name but a few.

On behalf of Members the Chair congratulated GM Moody on his British Empire Medal and thanked his family for all the support provided to him.

- **PAY AWARD FOR GREEN BOOK STAFF**

The Chair advised Members that they would be aware from their home Authorities that this year's pay award for Green Book staff had not been agreed. He stated that like local authorities the Fire & Rescue Authority had been served with a notice of intent from Unison union that they would now ballot their members for strike action.

- **RECENT PASS OUT PARADE**

With reference to the recent Pass Out Parade of the Service's newest wholetime firefighters, the Chair regrettably informed Members that due to concerns over the new strain of Covid-19 no guests were able to attend. The 24 trainees successfully passed out last Thursday in front of the Chief Fire officer and a few senior officers. Also the Service was able to live stream the event to family, friends and loved ones of the trainees.

On behalf of Members the Chair wished all the trainees the very best in their chosen career as operational firefighters within South Wales.

- **ASSISTANCE TO NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE**

The Chair reminded Members that from previous briefings they would be familiar with Welsh Government's ambition for firefighters across Wales to provide greater assistance to the National Health Service. He was now pleased to report that there had been progress in this area through a development group and the Minister's Fire Advisor had recently published a thematic review.

Following a request by the Chair, the Chief Fire Officer provided a brief overview of the Service's assistance to the National Health Service, and confirmed that a formal report would be presented at the next Fire & Rescue Authority meeting in the New Year.

- **AW ACHIEVING CARBON REDUCTION AUDIT**

The Chair informed Members that the Service had been through a Carbon Reduction and Sustainability audit, which Councillor David White had taken a full and active role in.

Following a request by the Chair, Councillor White provided a brief overview of the audit and the extensive work that was ongoing across the Service in this important area.

### **30. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

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

- Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on 27 September 2021
- Finance, Audit & Performance Management Scrutiny Group meeting held on 18 January 2021
- Local Pension Board Committee held on 28 June, 2021
- HR & Equalities Committee held on 5 July, 2021
- Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee held on 20 September, 2021, subject to the following amendment:- *Councillor Morgans is the Member for Rhondda Cynon Taff Unitary Authority and not Bridgend as recorded.*

With reference to the minutes recorded at the Finance, Asset & Performance Management Scrutiny Group meeting held on 11 October, 2021, the Chair requested that the word 'opposition' be withdrawn from the following statement contained within the minutes:- *'Councillor Brown reported that in the spirit of scrutiny, it is normal for an **opposition** party to take the chair, and Councillor Brown nominated herself, seconded by Councillor Naughton'.*

Following lengthy debate, Members of the Finance, Asset & Performance Management Scrutiny Group confirmed that the minutes recorded on 11 October, 2021, were a true and accurate record, and that the statement should remain. The minutes had also been formally approved at their meeting on 6 December, 2021.

Following further discussion, the Chair accepted Members recommendation to retain the wording within the statement, but he stressed that he firmly objected to the word 'opposition' as the Fire & Rescue Authority worked together as a team.

## **31. UPDATE ON ACTIONS**

The temporary ACO Corporate Services provided a brief overview and update on the following outstanding actions, which included minute numbers:- 20/21-32, 20/21-56.6, 20/21-56.10, 21/22-17.3.2, 21/22-17.3.3.

## **32. REPORTS FOR DECISION**

### **32.1. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT 2021/22**

The temporary Head of Finance & Procurement 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, 2021.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members unanimously agreed to note the report and treasury activity for the period 1 April – 30 September, 2021.

### **32.2. REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23**

The Treasurer advised Members that the presented report included the recommended draft Revenue Budget for 2022/23 considered by the Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee on 13 December, together with the supporting Capital Programme.

The Fire & Rescue Authority was asked to commence a budget consultation during December and January, prior to setting its final budget in February 2022.

The report included a proposed Revenue Budget of £79,304,057, representing a 2.29% increase over that set for 2021/22.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members unanimously agreed to approve the proposed draft Revenue and Capital Budgets as the basis for consultation.

The Chair apologised for having to leave the meeting at 1130 hrs, and wished all Members and Officers a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The Deputy Chair continued to chair the meeting on the Chair's behalf.

### **32.3 LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION ACCREDITATION**

The ACO People Services informed Members that the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage were set by UK Government and provided protection to low income workers. There was a statutory requirement placed upon employers to remunerate workers on or above those minimum rates. This requirement was enforceable under the terms of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998.

The Real Living Wage was distinct from the National Living Wage, representing the rate that a worker would have to earn to afford a minimum 'decent' standard of living. The campaign for employers to pay workers a Real Living Wage commenced in 2001, and was championed by the Living Wage Foundation.

The presented report was considered by the HR & Equalities Committee on 1 November, 2021, when it was agreed that South Wales Fire & Rescue Service (the 'Service') should gain accreditation as a 'Real Living Wage Employer'.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 32.3.1 Members unanimously agreed to note the content of the report.
- 32.3.2 Members unanimously agreed to note the decision of the HR & Equalities Committee on 1 November, 2021, to gain accreditation as a Living Wage Foundation employer.
- 32.3.3 Members unanimously agreed to approve the decision to gain accreditation of the Living Wage Foundation and become a Real Living Wage employer.

## **32.4 FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS – REMEDYING AGE DISCRIMINATION**

The ACO People Services reminded Members that in July 2021 the Fire & Rescue Authority, as Scheme Manager, agreed to provide pension benefit options for those individuals who were considered to be in scope for Immediate Detriment (ID), as described in the informal Home Office guidance issued on 10 June, 2021.

On 8 October, 2021, a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) was published and expanded the scope for processing ID cases. Since then the Home Office guidance had been withdrawn and HM Treasury had published a formal note in relation to processing cases. A joint statement by the LGA and FBU had also been published. At the time of writing the report further advice was awaited from the LGA so that formal advice could be provided to the Fire & Rescue Authority on the next steps.

- 32.4.1 Members agreed to note the content of the report.
- 32.4.2 Members agreed that work should continue on Immediate Detriment cases as previously agreed, and that work should commence to fully adopt the MoU, subject to receiving further legal advice.
- 32.4.3 Members agreed that a further report be presented to the Fire & Rescue Authority at their meeting in February 2022, which detailed the advice and next steps.

## **32.5 GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON AMENDMENTS TO FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEMES**

The ACO People Services informed Members that both the Welsh Government and UK Government had published consultations relating to proposed amendments to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulations 2015 (for Wales and England), which would require all current members of the Firefighters Pension Legacy Schemes to transition into the 2015 Scheme on 1 April, 2022.

The Welsh Government consultation opened on 25 October, and would close on 20 December, 2021. The UK Government consultation opened on 8 November, and would close on 2 January 2022.

The report provided the 'Employers Response' to both consultations, and was presented to Members for approval.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Members unanimously agreed the Employers Response to the consultations, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 attached to the report.

### **32.6 URBAN SEARCH & RESCUE – PROPOSED PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT WHITCHURCH FIRE STATION PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT**

The temporary ACO Corporate Services informed Members that South Wales Fire & Rescue Service was in receipt of Welsh Government funding for the development at the rear of Whitchurch Fire Station to house the Urban Search & Rescue (USAR) facility.

Given that the value of the contract was above the delegated threshold, the ACO Corporate Services sought Members approval to proceed with the award of contract.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Members unanimously agreed to approve the award of the one off contract for the construction of the USAR development to Trio Building Contractors Limited.

## **33. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**

### **33.1 HALF YEARLY HEALTH CHECK OF PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW OF STRATEGIC THEMES**

The temporary ACO Corporate Services provided Members with an update on the Business Plan Actions contained within the report, and the Chief Fire Officer provided a brief overview of the individual stats contained within the Performance Monitoring Report.



## **RESOLVED THAT**

Following a question and answer session, Members agreed to note the half yearly health check of Performance and Review of Strategic Themes.

The Deputy Chair took the opportunity to thank all employees across the Service, uniformed and corporate staff, for all their hard work and commitment throughout the Covid pandemic. The Chief Fire Officer agreed to pass on Members thanks to all staff.

### **33.2 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT – FEBRUARY 2022**

The temporary 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 at Appendix 1, which provided details of payments to Members of Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities.

### **33.3. AUDIT OF SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY'S ASSESSMENT OF 2020-21 PERFORMANCE**

The Wales Audit Officer presented a report which provided Members with a brief overview of the 'Audit of South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Assessment of 2020-21 Performance'.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to note the audit of South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Assessment of 2020-21 Performance.

### **33.5 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2021/2022**

The temporary ACO Corporate Services provided a brief overview of the Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022, and subsequent amendments.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to note the Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022, and subsequent amendments.

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

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

The Deputy Chair took the opportunity to thank all Officers for the support they had given Chairs and Deputy Chairs of all Fire Authority Committees throughout the year

The Deputy Chair closed the meeting by wishing all Members and Officers a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.