

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 1000 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 8 OR REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

25. 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
K Carr	12:00 hrs	Cardiff
C Elsbury	11:45 hrs	Caerphilly
S Evans		Torfaen
P Ford		Bridgend
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
M Hughes		Bridgend
A Hussey		Caerphilly
S Melbourne	12:05 hrs	Cardiff
D Naughton		Cardiff
D Parkin	11:30 hrs	Rhondda Cynon Taff
M Powell		Monmouthshire
B Proctor		Cardiff
A Roberts	10:45 hrs	Rhondda Cynon Taff
T Watkins		Newport
C Wright		Caerphilly

APOLOGIES:

D Isaac	Merthyr Tydfil
S Malson	Torfaen
S McConnel	Monmouthshire
J Morgan	Blaenau Gwent
T/DCFO D Rose	Dir of Service Delivery
ACFO R Prendergast	Dir of Technical Services

ABSENT:

M Al-Nuaimi	Newport
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OFFICERS PRESENT:- CFO H Jakeway, T/ACFO N Williams – Director of Technical Services, ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, T/ACO G Thomas – Monitoring Officer & Temp. 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, Mr S Deasy – Sustainable Development Officer, Mr N Selwyn – Audit Wales Officer

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillors Evans declared a personal interest in Action No. 20/21-32 which related to New Inn Fire Station.

On behalf of Officers, the T/Monitoring Officer declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 6.ii 'Independent Pay Review – Principal Officers Remuneration'.

27. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **THE SAD PASSING OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

The Chair wished to thank all Fire & Rescue Authority Members and Officers of the Service who impeccably observed official protocols and displayed the utmost dignity and respect during the mourning of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

Members were advised that on Friday, 16 September, the Chair and Chief Fire Officer attended the Service of Prayer and Reflection at Llandaff Cathedral in the presence of King Charles III and the Queen Consort. The Chair took the opportunity to thank all the Officers involved in the planning and participation of the visit of the Monarch.

The Chair was also proud to inform Members that CFO Huw Jakeway had been selected to represent the Welsh Fire & Rescue Services' in Westminster Abbey for the Funeral of the late Queen

Elizabeth II, which was a momentous and historical event, and the Chief Fire Officer felt very proud and privileged to attend.

- **SINCERE CONDOLENCES TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY'S FORMER CHAIR**

On behalf of Members, the Chair wished to express sincere condolences to the Fire Authority's former Chairman, Councillor Tudor Davies, on the recent passing of his daughter, Suzanne.

- **ATTENDANCE AT NATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS' MEMORIAL SERVICE, LONDON**

The Chair informed Members that on Sunday, 4 September, the Deputy Chair, Councillor Pam Drake, and Councillor Steve Evans, accompanied Officers and members of the Fire Cadets to the National Firefighters Memorial Service, in London.

- **VISIT BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP**

The Chair was pleased to report that the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership visited the Service on 21 September at the White Water Centre, Cardiff. The Chief and Chair met with the Deputy Minister and her Officials to discuss current issues, including Broadening the Role of a Firefighter, Thematic reports, and UK pay discussions. Following this the Deputy Minister observed a water rescue training exercise and was transported back to the Senedd across Cardiff Bay in one of the Service's rescue boats.

- **THANK YOU ADDRESS TO OUTGOING CHAIR OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Chair took the opportunity to express his sincere thanks and best wishes to the outgoing Chair of the Standards Committee, Independent Member Mr Geoffrey Hughes. Mr Hughes served on the Standards Committee for the maximum tenure of twelve years, with the last six years as Chair.

Members were advised that Mr Ronald Alexander, Independent Member, had been appointed as the new Chair of the Standards Committee commencing September 2022.

Members also noted that a recruitment campaign to appoint a new Independent Member of the Standards Committee had taken place during July, and the Chair was pleased to confirm that Ms Katie

Thorogood was the successful candidate who had been appointed to the position.

- **PAY AWARDS**

Members were informed that the Craftworkers pay award which covered the Service's Fleet & Engineering apprentices, had been agreed at 1.75% from 1 April, 2021.

The Youth Workers pay award which covered the Service's Cadet Instructors and Sessional Workers had also been agreed at 1.75% as from 1 September 2021. Both increases would be implemented with immediate effect.

The group noted that negotiations were still ongoing for all other pay groups.

- **WORLD RESCUE CHALLENGE EVENT, LUXEMBOURG**

The Chair informed Members that he was once again proud to report the excellent performance of the Service at the recent World Rescue Challenge event in Luxembourg. The team became World Champions at the complex extrication, and third overall for the event. The Trauma team also claimed second place in the World Trauma challenge.

On behalf of Members, the Chair took the opportunity to pass on congratulations to all those involved in the World Champions, as well as all the teams competing at the West Midlands UKRO Rescue Challenge.

- **PRESENTATION EVENING**

Members were reminded that due to the recent period of National Mourning, the Presentation Evening due to take place on 14 September understandably had to be postponed.

The Chair informed Members that the next Presentation Evening would take place on Tuesday, 27 September, 2022, and he urged Members to join him to support the enjoyable event.

- **WHOLETIME RECRUITS**

The Chair was pleased to report that 24 trainees had commenced their 13-week Initial Wholetime Recruits Training course, and the date of the Passing-Out Parade had been set for 1 December,

2022. Members were advised that they would receive invitations to the event in due course.

- **EMERGENCY SERVICES 999 DAY**

Members were informed that the Emergency Services 999 Day would once again be held at Cardiff Bay on 22 October. Members would receive further details on the event within the next few weeks.

The Chair urged Members to attend the key event at some point throughout the day in order to support the Service, as it was one of the largest community displays and engagement events run by the organisation.

- **LOCAL AUTHORITY ROADSHOWS**

The Chair assured Members that he would be attending the Local Authority Roadshow presentations with the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer to attend individual Local Authority Council meetings. The aim was to highlight the outstanding range of services which the Fire & Rescue Service provided to the communities of South Wales, as well as to report on the financial challenges which the organisation was facing in the medium term.

- **RETIREMENT OF SENIOR OFFICER**

The Chair took the opportunity to inform Members of the retirement of Area Manager Jason Evans, the Head of Risk Reduction. Jason had joined the Service in 1990 and would leave the Senior Management Team to take up an opportunity outside of the Fire & Rescue Service. Jason had been an outstanding Officer, and on behalf of Members the Chair wished him all the very best in his future career.

28. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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

- Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on 11 July 2022
- Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee meeting held on 11 April, 2022

- Finance, Asset & Performance Management Scrutiny Group meeting held on 4 April, 2022

Councillor Holmes, who as Deputy Chair chaired the last Finance, Asset & Performance Management Scrutiny Group meeting, raised his disappointment that the Chair of the Committee had not contact him following the meeting.

The Chair reminded all Chairpersons of individual Fire Authority Committees of the importance of making regular contact with their Deputy Chairs either before or following their formal meeting

29. UPDATE ON ACTIONS

The T/Monitoring Officer provided a brief overview and update on outstanding actions:- 20/21-32, 20/21-56.6, and 22/23-22.3.2.

The ACO People Services also 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, 21/22-48.7 and 22/23-22.4.2.

The Chief Fire Officer provided Members with a brief update on outstanding action 22/23-22.1.4, along with an overview of recent discussions with the Deputy Minister.

30. REPORTS FOR DECISION

30.1. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY, RESERVE STRATEGY AND REVENUE BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

The Treasurer presented Members with a report on the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 to 2026/27 for approval. It included budget projections based on the Authority's plans and strategies informed by the general financial and operational environment in which services were provided.

The Strategy indicated that the Authority's cost base would significantly increase over the currently approved budget in response to the general inflationary pressures in the UK economy. This would present a challenge to funding councils next year.

The Strategy was drawn up in the light of rapidly changing economic projections and few firm resource commitments beyond

the current year. The background introduced significant financial risk in the Strategy.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a question and answer session, Members agreed to note the risks and uncertainties within the projections and approved the Strategy as the basis for financial planning over the Strategy period.

Councillor Roberts left the meeting at 10:45 hours.

All Officers withdrew from the formal meeting and left the room before Members considered Agenda Item 6.ii 'Independent Pay Review – Principal Officers Remuneration'.

The ACO People Services remained in the meeting room to formally present the report and to answer procedural questions.

30.2 INDEPENDENT PAY REVIEW – PRINCIPAL OFFICERS' REMUNERATION

The ACO People Services reminded Members that the review of Brigade Manager/Principal Officers' remuneration was requested by Fire Authority Members following the completion of the Job Evaluation exercise for Green Book employees in July 2021.

In December 2021 Total Reward Projects (TRP) were commissioned to undertake the review of Principal Officer pay. TRP presented their report to the HR & Equalities Committee in January 2022, and the Fire Authority in March 2022, where it was agreed that further consideration should be given at the July 2022 meeting.

In July, Members discussed the report and recommended an increase of 4.5% to the Chief Fire Officer's salary. The recommendation was subsequently referred to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW), for consideration at its 1 September meeting. The presented report shared IRPW's response and confirmed the next steps.

Following questions on the next stages, the ACO People Services left the meeting room for Members to consider the report.

RESOLVED THAT

- 30.2.1 Following lengthy debate, Members unanimously agreed to acknowledge the letter dated 18 August, 2022, from Welsh Government, attached to the report at Appendix 1, which confirmed that the remit of the IRPW did not include reviewing the Chief Fire Officer's remuneration and that the guidance had been changed to reflect this.
- 30.2.2 Members unanimously agreed to acknowledge the email attached to the report at Appendix 2, which also confirmed the change to the guidance and there was no longer a requirement for the IRPW to review proposals relating to the salary of the Chief Fire Officer.
- 30.2.3 In light of recommendations 1 and 2 above, and to reflect the decision reached at July's Fire Authority meeting, Members unanimously agreed that the salary of the Chief Fire Officer would be increased by 4.5%, effective from 1 July 2022, which was the date of the decision reached by Fire Authority. Thereafter, that the effective date of implementation of the annual pay review undertaken by the Fire Authority would be 1 July.
- 30.2.4 Members unanimously agreed that a further piece of work would be commissioned immediately on Principal Officer pay as requested by the Fire Authority at its July 2022 meeting.
- 30.2.5 Following a request by the Chair, Members unanimously agreed that a review on Principal Officers' pay would be carried out on a yearly basis by an external consultant for a period of two years, followed by a review thereafter.
- 30.2.6 Following each review, and for the benefit of transparency. Members agreed that the IRPW would be notified of any changes to Principal Officers pay.

All Officers returned to the room for the formal meeting to continue.

Councillor Parkin left the meeting at 11:30 hours.

31. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

31.1 2021/22 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The T/Head of Finance presented a report for Members to consider the results of treasury management activities for the year ending 31 March, 2022, in accordance with the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a question and answer session, Members agreed to note the Annual Treasury Management Review for 2021/22 and approved the actual prudential and treasury indicators set therein.

Councillor Elsbury left the meeting at 11:45 hours.

31.2 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

The T/Director of Technical Services informed Members that the Health, Safety and Wellbeing report for 2021/2022 provided a summary of the key activities undertaken and the performance of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service in the area of Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

RESOLVED THAT

- 31.2.1 Following a question and answer session, Members agreed to accept the report on the performance of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service in the area of Health, Safety and Wellbeing.
- 31.2.2 Members agreed to note the overall success achieved during 2021/2022 in the delivery of an environment that was supportive of the Health, Safety and Welfare of staff, especially during the recent pandemic.
- 31.2.3 Members agreed to endorse and support the range of initiatives underway to proactively and reactively

support the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of staff employed by South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

Members wished to record their thanks to Officers for presenting the excellent comprehensive report.

31.3 CARBON REDUCTION AND BIODIVERSITY PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE

The T/Head of Finance presented a report to Members which set out the progress made in the second year of the Carbon Reduction Plan (CRP) 2020-2023, and Biodiversity Forward Plan (BFP), and provided a look ahead to the third year of planned activities.

RESOLVED THAT

Following debate, Members agreed to note the progress of Year 2 of the Carbon Reduction and Biodiversity Plan, and thanked Officers for presenting an excellent report.

Councillor Carr left the meeting at 12:00 hours.

Councillors Melbourne and Wright left the meeting at 12:05 hours.

31.4 CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE FOR THE AUDIT OF SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY'S 2022-2023 IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Audit Wales Officer presented Members with a brief overview of the Certificate of Compliance for the audit of South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's 2022-2023 Improvement Plan.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the Certificate of Compliance for the Audit of South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's 2022-2023 Improvement Plan.

31.5. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023

The T/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.

32. 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.

Councillor Buckley took the opportunity to thank Officers for their well-presented reports. He also wished to record his thanks to a local off-duty operational firefighter who had kindly provided his medical kit in order to help his elderly aunt while she was waiting for the arrival of an ambulance. Councillor Buckley stressed he was very grateful for his help and assistance.