

## SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

### MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 1030 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 8 OR REMOTELY VIA STARLEAF

#### 20. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
D T Davies (Chair)		Caerphilly
S Bradwick (Deputy Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
D Ali		Cardiff
P Drake		Vale of Glamorgan
S Ebrahim		Cardiff
C Elsbury		Caerphilly
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
M Spencer		Newport
H Thomas		Newport
D White		Bridgend
J Williams		Cardiff

#### APOLOGIES:

L Brown		Monmouthshire
W Hodgins		Blaenau Gwent
S Chapman		Monitoring Officer

#### ABSENT:

M Colbran		Merthyr Tydfil
A Lister		Cardiff
S Malsom		Torfaen

**OFFICERS PRESENT:-** CFO H Jakeway, Temporary DCFO R Prendergast – Director of Technical Services, ACFO D Rose – Director of Service Delivery, 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, Mr Steve Frank – Wales Audit Officer

As the Chair would be joining the meeting at a later time, the Deputy Chair informed Members that he would chair the meeting on his behalf.

## **21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor S Evans declared an interest in outstanding Action No. 20/21-32, which related to the relocation of New Inn Fire Station.

## **22. DEPUTY CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **FESTIVAL OF RESCUE 2021 – TYNE & WEAR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

The Deputy Chair informed Members that on 17 and 18 September three teams from South Wales Fire & Rescue Service competed in the Extrication Challenge at the 'Festival of Rescue 2021', with one team competing in the Rope Rescue Challenge, and another in the Water Rescue Challenge.

He was pleased to announce that all the teams were extremely successful and received trophies in the following categories:-

- Winners of the Extrication Challenge
- Best Incident Commander in the Extrication Challenge
- Third best Medic in the Extrication Challenge
- Winners of the Rope Rescue Challenge
- Best Incident Commander in the Rope Rescue Challenge
- Best Medic in the Rope Rescue Challenge
- Best Technical Team
- Second in the Trauma Challenge
- Third in the Heavy Rescue Challenge

On behalf of Members the Deputy Chair took the opportunity to congratulate all team members for their dedication, professionalism and commitment to excellence, and for being fantastic ambassadors for the Service.

- **WHOLETIME TRAINEE FIREFIGHTERS**

The Deputy Chair was pleased to report that on Monday, 20 September, 2021, 24 Wholetime trainee firefighters had joined the Service. The trainees would now commence a 13 week training programme to ensure that they were equipped and ready to serve their local communities professionally and safely.

The Deputy Chair highlighted that with many Covid restrictions being lifted that hopefully Members would be able to host a Passing-out Parade for the trainees and their family members.

Officers agreed to keep Members updated on future planning arrangements for the next Wholetime Passing-out Parade event.

- **VISIT BY DEPUTY MINISTER MS HANNAH BLYTHYN**

The Deputy Chair was pleased to report that on 9 September, 2021, the Service hosted the Deputy Minister Ms Hannah Blythyn at Fire Service Headquarters, and he attended the event on behalf of the Chairman.

Members noted that the Deputy Minister gained an insight into how the Service tackled wildfires, including tactics, knowledge and equipment, as well as the extensive partnership working that was ongoing between the Service, Natural Resources Wales, local authorities, landowners, and the police.

The Deputy Minister also met the four Firefighters that deployed to Greece as part of the NFCC response to the UK's assistance. The team's skills, knowledge and experience were well recognised during the deployment, and all four were a welcome addition to the 21 person strong team who were deployed for approximately 10 days. The Deputy Chair took the opportunity to thank the four Firefighters for their commitment to assisting others in their time of need.

- **DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICER SALLY CHAPMAN**

The Deputy Chair was sorry to report that Deputy Chief Officer Sally Chapman was still on long-term sickness leave. On behalf of Members the Chair took the opportunity to wish Sally a speedy recovery.

The Deputy Chair advised Members that following discussions with the Chief Fire Officer it had been agreed that Sally's management role would be temporarily covered by Mr Geraint Thomas, and ACFO Richie Prendergast would be temporarily promoted to cover the Deputy Chief Officer role. He thanked both officers for stepping into the role on behalf of the Service.

- **WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICE**

The Deputy Chair informed Members that they would have seen media reports of military assistance being provided to the Welsh Ambulance Service as pressures on the NHS mounted. They would also be familiar with the support some of the Service's firefighters had provided throughout the first wave of the pandemic.

Members were reminded that at the last Fire & Rescue Authority meeting the Chief Fire Officer had informed them that the Service's support at that time was stood down by the Welsh Ambulance Service. However, the Deputy Chair could now inform Members that this support had recommenced several weeks ago, and the Service had returned to providing assistance once again.

### **23. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

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

- Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on 19 July 2021
- Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee meeting held on 15 March 2021
- Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee meeting held on 26 July 2021

## **24. UPDATE ON ACTIONS**

The 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 and 21/22-17.1.1. The CFO provided Members with an update on outstanding action 20/21-56.10, and the ACO People Services provided an update on outstanding action numbers 21/22-17.3.2, and 21/22-17.3.3

## **25. REPORTS FOR DECISION**

### **25.1. HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021**

The Director of Technical Services informed Members that the Health, Safety and Wellbeing report for 2020/2021 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**

- 25.1.1 Following a question and answer session and lengthy discussion on the importance of reporting 'Near Misses', Members unanimously agreed to accept the report on the performance of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service in the area of Health, Safety and Wellbeing.
- 25.1.2 Members unanimously agreed to note the overall success achieved during 2020/2021 in the delivery of an environment that was supportive of the Health, Safety and Welfare of staff, especially during the current pandemic.
- 25.1.3 Members unanimously 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 and appreciation to officers and staff for a very informative comprehensive report which contained clear guidelines.

## **25.2. REPORT ON END OF LIFE OPERATIONAL EQUIPMENT**

The Director of Technical Services presented a report which updated Members on the disposal of redundant operational equipment since 2019 via Fire Aid / International Fire & Rescue Association (IFRA).

### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 25.2.1 Members unanimously agreed to approve the donation of income received from the disposal helmets to the Firefighters Charity as outlined in paragraph 2.3 within the report.
- 25.2.2 Following lengthy discussion on Councillors Ali and Ebrahim being unable to make contact with Fire Aid, Officers assured Members that they would assist them in linking up with charitable organisation 'Fire Aid' in order to discuss the possibility of end of life equipment being donated to support other countries and charities.

## **26. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**

### **26.1 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2026/27**

The Treasurer advised Members that the presented report outlined the headlines of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 to 2026/27, as presented to the Finance & Performance Management Committee on 23 September, 2021. The Strategy 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 increase by 2.84% next year, with increases averaging around 2% for the remainder of the Plan period.

Members were informed that next year's increase reflected an update to the figure provided with the Finance, Audit & Performance Management agenda, to take account of the estimated £300,000 (0.4%) cost of the recent announcement around Social Care funding using National Insurance Contributions.

The Treasurer highlighted that the Strategy was drawn up in light of few firm resource commitments beyond the current year, and stressed that this background, together with the uncertainties arising from the ongoing pandemic, introduced significant risk in the Strategy.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

Following a question and answer session, Members agreed to note that the report was the basis for next year's budget planning.

### **26.2 2020/21 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

The Treasurer presented a report for Members to consider the results of Treasury Management activities for the year ending 31 March, 2021, in accordance with the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to note the Annual Treasury Management Review for 2020/21, and approved the actual 2020/21 prudential and treasury indicators therein.

### **26.3. CORPORATE RESILIENCE REPORT – SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

The Audit Wales Officer presented the following report to Members, 'Corporate Resilience Report – South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority' and took the opportunity to highlight 5 key recommendations for improvement.

Following a question and answer session on the key areas, e.g. Fire Cover Review and Capital Programme, and lengthy debate on the amount of scrutiny carried out during Fire Authority meetings, Members highlighted their disappointment and stressed that they regularly challenged officers on a number of issues and proposals.

The Deputy Chair also raised his concerns and reminded the Audit Officer that the Service had to adhere to a number of policies and procedures as well as an annual budget cycle.

Following further discussion on recommendations to improve and address key proposals, the Wales Audit Officer advised that certain areas should be evaluated in order to ensure value for money, and for Members to investigate and consider how other Authorities were performing and carrying out their role.

The Chief Fire Officer assured the Wales Audit Officer that Members and Officers would focus on the recommendations for improvement, and gave a brief overview of each of the following key areas contained within the report:- Policies & Procedures, Governance, Partnership, Unwanted Fire Signals.

Following further discussion on how Members could provide evidence of scrutiny at meetings, the Wales Audit Officer advised that discussion issues and actions should be demonstrated and recorded in the formal minutes of each meeting.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 26.3.1 Members agreed to note the Corporate Resilience Report for South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 26.3.2 The Chair and Deputy Chair assured Members that they would write a letter to the Wales Auditor General highlighting their disappointment and concerns with the content of the report.

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

The ACO Corporate Services provided a brief overview of the Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 26.4.1 Members agreed to note the Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022.
- 26.4.2 The ACO Corporate Services reminded Members to advise Officers if they wished to raise any reports at future meetings.

**26.5. 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.

The Deputy Chair closed the meeting by reminding Members to contact ACFO Prendergast if they wished to purchase any end of life helmets and donate money to the Firefighters Charity.