

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 6 JUNE 2025 AT 14:30 IN MEETING ROOM 08 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Baroness Wilcox of Newport, Chair
Vij Randeniya
Kirsty Williams
Carl Foulkes

OFFICERS PRESENT: Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan, ACO Alison Reed – Director of People Services, ACFO Brian Thompson - Director of Technical Services, T/ACFO Christian Hadfield, Dominic Mika – Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, Sara Halbert – Treasurer, Wayne Thomas – T/Head of Corporate Support, Jake Alpert – Chief of Staff, T/AM Mike Wyatt – Head of Risk Reduction, Julie Owens – Audit Wales, GM Peter Howard-Jones

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were recorded for Head of Finance, Procurement & Property Lisa Mullan and Kate Havard from Audit Wales.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair thanked the Committee for reconvening following the postponement of the Board of Commissioners on 30 May 2025.

4. MATTERS TO BE RAISED FROM COMMISSIONER SUB COMMITTEES

The Chair confirmed there were no matters arising.

5. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF:

a. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 28 MARCH 2025

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion

and no matters arising.

**b. PEOPLE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 07
FEBRUARY 2025**

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion and no matters arising.

**c. STRATEGIC CHANGE, TRANSFORMATION AND CULTURE
COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2025**

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion and no matters arising.

**d. FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 21 MARCH
2025**

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion and no matters arising.

6. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Kirsty Williams requested the action 02/12 6.1 Efficiency plan to remain on the action log as ongoing until the agenda item is discussed at the Board of Commissioners.

Dean Loader, Assistant Chief Fire Officer suggested keeping the action 03/28 6.5 Strategic Performance Indicators open on the action log while they incorporate the HMI KPI's into the Service. An informal session where ideas can be explored will be scheduled with the Commissioners before this is presented.

7. REPORTS FOR DECISION

7.1 SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP DUTY REPORTING

Alison Reed, Director of People Services presented the Social Partnership duty report under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act. The Service's first Social Partnership Annual Report is due from 1 April 2025 and is required to be published after the end of the financial year, explaining what the Service has done to comply with the duty in the preceding 12 months.

The report has been shared with the Representative Bodies, with only the Fire Brigade Union responding to comment. Dean Loader explained as this is the first time the report has been put together, there has been

learnings moving forward on how the Service shapes the report. It will be shared with the Welsh Government and a template is likely to be developed for future reporting. Dean Loader highlighted the comments from the Fire Brigade Union are disappointing, however the report is true and accurate from his perspective. The Chief Fire Officer added that from a personal perspective, he has extended that he wants to engage as much as possible, as early as he can and have an open door policy. The Chief Fire Officer echoed Dean Loader's comments but fully intends to work in Social Partnership.

Lady Wilcox was pleased that we are participating in this policy from Welsh Government and that we are on target, however it was unfortunate that other Representative Bodies did not respond.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.1.1 The Commissioners reviewed and approved the Social Partnership Duty Annual Report for 2024/2025.

7.2 AUDIT WALES ENQUIRIES TO 'THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE' – DRAFT RESPONSE

Wayne Thomas introduced the report which presents the 2024-25 audit enquiries letter from Audit Wales and seeks the Commissioners review and endorsement of the responses submitted on behalf of both management and those charged with governance. Carl Foulkes queried that some responses relate to the Fire Authority while some state Commissioners. A conversation has been had with Audit Wales and it is the intention that we would understand who they are taking about. Lady Wilcox would be grateful for a formal response to ensure total accuracy.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.2.1 The Commissioners reviewed the contents of the Audit Wales Letter.
- 7.2.2 The Commissioners endorsed the proposed responses to Appendices 1 to 3 for submission to Audit Wales by the required deadline of 30 June 2025.

8. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

8.1 SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE (SWFRS) CONTAMINANTS PROGRAMME

Christian Hadfield, Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report to

provide the Commissioners with an update on the progress of the introduction of a Contaminants Work Activity, and how SWFRS will further mitigate and manage the complex risks associated with fire contamination.

A working group has been set up for a number of years and has now been set up as a permanent dedicated group to look at contaminants holistically, which are situated within the Resilience and Planning team. The team will be governed by Health and Safety and will go through SLT and be brought to the Commissioners to report annually on where we are. The team has been tasked with pulling together a clear roadmap and the finances. Christian Hadfield recognised that there will be some financial investment to come in time which will come through the Finance and Audit Committee. Carl Foulkes stated that the sooner we can get an oversight on the capital plan then we are able to make decisions on budget spends and engage with Welsh Government across all Wales earlier to ensure we are in a strong position. Vij Randeniya queried whether we have looked at the NFCC to determine who is ahead of the curve and whether we are looking at this wider in terms of internationally. Christian Hadfield recently returned from a visit to Sweden and noted that they are significantly ahead with their decontamination. The Chief Fire Officer has reached out to contacts in Austria for their approach too. Dean Loader observed that it is fantastic that we are gaining knowledge on this area and the work being progressed and noted that we have to look at human behaviours and their understanding and knowledge to ensure they are fully engaged when this will be implemented. The Chief Fire Officer offered his full support to Christian Hadfield on this work.

RESOLVED THAT

8.1.1 The Commissioners noted the report.

8.2 SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SWFRS) CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE

The Chief Fire Officer presented a statement on the organisational update and listed the work and activities that he has engaged in since his arrival. The Chief Fire Officer stated that we have an ambitious strategy and transformation programme and are looking at an 8 year timeframe to achieve the vision that we have set.

The Chief Fire Officer provided the Board with details of the progress of the transformation that we have done so far. The Senior Leadership Team was engaged in a full day of prioritisation; there were many deemed P1 which has now been reprioritised. Kirsty Williams queried

the data in appendix 1 and how do we manage the timescales of the mandatory training; it was discussed that we started at 70% and a directive from the Chief Fire Officer was given for training to be complete by 16th June. The Chief Fire Officer noted there has been evidence and academic work on training and has discussed with Learning and Development an opportunity of a different approach that he is exploring. Alison Reed added that the NFCC added new metrics for culture and we are looking to adopt these.

RESOLVED THAT

8.2.1 The Commissioners noted the update.

8.3 EMERGENCY PLANNING UPDATE

Peter Howard-Jones presented the report which provides an overview of the Emergency Planning and preparedness undertaken by the Resilience and Planning team. Some highlights are that our major event planning is to co-ordinate Principality stadium events such as rugby, football, concerts. The team has visited Stuttgart where previously the Euros were held and have maintained communication with them and continue to work with their strategic lead. Our Business Continuity Plans (BCP) are up to date. In terms of cyber security, an unplanned cyber exercise was set up in February with some learning outcomes which is fed through the Security Risk Group that the group continues to focus on. The Chief Fire Officer stated that cyber security awareness is the responsibility of everyone and this is an important area as our systems could be taken down for a long time if this happened.

Vij Randeniya referred to point 3 on page 111 of the papers that 13 departments have completed the training and requested when figures are given, that this is shown out of how many and a deadline or target date is provided. Carl Foulkes would like to see the testing regime and asked if the Commissioners should be dip-sampling the BCPs. It was agreed that this question is for the new Monitoring Officer and Wayne Thomas will find out. Brian Thompson commented that we do have robust ICT systems and it was agreed that ICT will provide an offline briefing on what our ICT security looks like to the Commissioners. Dean Loader sits on the Wales Resilience and Planning Team and we are strategically in the wider picture; Christian Hadfield added that he is the new chair of the LRF Local Resilience Forum and South Wales Police has offered to come in as a critical friend when we plan a critical incident in future.

RESOLVED THAT

8.3.1 The Commissioners noted the update.

8.4 ANNUAL UPDATE 2024-2025 PEOPLE COMMITTEE

Alison Reed, Director of People Services referred the Board to the appendix within the report that sets out the activity considered by the People Committee. Upon reflection, Lady Wilcox observed that in future that the report is presented by the Chair of that committee. Kirsty Williams queried whether we operate a committee effectiveness on an annual basis as this provides an opportunity to reflect if the committee is effective and the quality of reports is of a set standard and suggested this is a point for Wayne Thomas to take up with the new Monitoring Officer.

RESOLVED THAT

8.4.1 The Commissioners noted the report and update.

8.5 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Wayne Thomas, Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the update on behalf of Lisa Mullan and explained there was nothing specific to draw to attention to and provided an overview of what the committee entails. Lady Wilcox wished to record her thanks to Lisa Mullan publicly for her efforts in stepping up to Interim Treasurer. It was highlighted that the Medium Term Financial Planning will be brought to the Committee in September.

RESOLVED THAT

8.5.1 The Commissioners noted the report and update.

8.6 ANNUAL REPORT STRATEGIC CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION CULTURE COMMITTEE

Dominic Mika, Director of Strategic Change and Transformation explained that this is a new Board that is set up to provide scrutiny on our Service Improvement Boards. The Board covers the highlights that the Chief Fire Officer covered in his organisational update. Kirsty Williams explained as co-Chair that the committee is up and running and both Thematic and Culture Service Improvement Boards are useful forums to have constructive challenge around delivery.

RESOLVED THAT

8.6.1 The Commissioners noted the report and update.

8.7 SWFRS AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM (AFA) RESPONSE CHANGE UPDATE

Mike Wyatt, Area Manager provided an update on the progress of the response change. The NHS response change live date was amended to 6 April, and this delay was given to allow people to revise their response strategies, and if they were outside of the scope to apply for an exemption. To date we have received 14 exemptions, the next steps will be to continue to monitor, review and react swiftly to identifiable trends. Vij Randeniya appreciated these updates and highlighted a lot of work has gone into this behind the scenes. Mike Wyatt reported a number of the exemptions have been rejected as they have a response team, and they have a responsibility in those teams. Some exemptions have been granted based on a number of factors such as staffing and what type of patients are being looked after. The team are taking into account different factors and are not relying on one. Mike Wyatt is expecting figures to fluctuate but will continually monitor this for 12 months before considering business as usual.

Dean Loader explained from an operations perspective, a 40% reduction has allowed greater efficiency which will lead to more training time and risk reduction activities. Kirsty Williams stated that there is confidence in the organisation that we can deliver change and she commended the way this has been done by demonstrating that we have listened to our key stakeholders and adapted our policy accordingly.

RESOLVED THAT

8.7.1 The Commissioners noted the update.

8.8 ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2025 – AUDIT WALES

Wayne Thomas presented the report on behalf of Lisa Mullan, Head of Finance, Property and Procurement which presents the Draft Audit Plan 2025 issued by Audit Wales for the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority. It outlines the scope, timing, and fee structure of the statutory audit work to be undertaken in the 2025-26 financial year.

Julie Owens, Audit Wales did not have anything further to add to the report and covered the key points which includes our key responsibilities that are outlined throughout the document. A detailed audit is contained in the audit plan and the formal deadline will be the end of October. It

was clarified that Treasurer Sara Halbert will be authorised to provide final feedback to Audit Wales and agree the final version of the Audit Plan on behalf of the Authority.

RESOLVED THAT

8.8.1 The Commissioners note the contents of the Draft Audit Plan 2025.

8.8.2 The Commissioners proposed that Treasurer Sara Halbert be authorised to provide final feedback to Audit Wales and agree the final version of the Audit Plan on behalf of the Authority.

9. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE 2025/2026

There were no comments or issues with the Forward Work Programme for the year 2025/2026.

RESOLVED THAT

9.1 The Commissioners noted the Forward Work Programme.

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

There were no items that the Chairperson deemed urgent.