

**NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY  
EXECUTIVE PANEL**

Minutes of the Executive Panel Meeting of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on 17 July 2017 at Fire and Rescue Headquarters, St Asaph. Meeting commenced at 10am.

PRESENT

Councillors:

|                     |                                |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| M Ll Davies (Chair) | Denbighshire County Council    |
| B Blakeley          | Denbighshire County Council    |
| A Davies            | Denbighshire County Council    |
| V Gay               | Flintshire County Council      |
| J B Hughes          | Gwynedd Council                |
| P R Lewis           | Conwy County Borough Council   |
| P Pemberton         | Wrexham County Borough Council |
| R Roberts           | Wrexham County Borough Council |
| A Tansley           | Conwy County Borough Council   |
| G Williams          | Gwynedd Council                |

ALSO PRESENT:

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); D Docx (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); R Simmons and G Brandrick (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer).

APOLOGIES

|             |                              |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| M Bateman   | Flintshire County Council    |
| R Griffiths | Anglesey County Council      |
| E W Jones   | Anglesey County Council      |
| R E Parry   | Conwy County Borough Council |

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

1.1 None

2 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

2.1 The Chair informed members that the CFO had asked to address members on the firefighters' pay offer; this will be done under part II conditions.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2017

3.1 The minutes of the last meeting were submitted for approval.

3.2 **RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true and correct record.**

#### 4 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 *11.2 Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 - Transitional Protection Legal Challenge* – the DCFO informed members that the Employment Tribunal had ruled in favour of the Fire and Rescue Services National Employers (NJC); however, the case is now going to an appeal which is likely to take place in 2018.

#### 5 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 5.1 The DCFO led members through the performance monitoring report for the 2016-2017 financial year. The report compared performance to the previous year, 2015-16, as well as the average of the three previous years.
- 5.2 It was pleasing to note that there had been a reduction in the number of injuries sustained as a result of accidental fires in dwellings and more people had been able to escape unharmed and unaided from such incidents. It was noted that all four fatalities had now been confirmed by the Coroner as being a result of accidental fires in dwellings.
- 5.3 27% of the home safety checks undertaken in 2016-17 had been referrals from partner organisations and the Service is continuing to work with partners to ensure referrals are made for vulnerable people in the community. Members discussed the success of the home safety check programme and the fitting of smoke alarms and noted that it had been in place for 10 years now which meant that the smoke alarms fitted in 2007-2008 were coming to the end of their battery life. In order for the Service to continue with the programme, funding was required and it was acknowledged that resource is scarcer now compared to 10 years ago.
- 5.4 There had been a 15.5% reduction in deliberate fires and this could be partly attributed to the work of the joint fire and police Arson Reduction Team together with partners to target areas where deliberate fires have been problematic.
- 5.5 The number of special service incidents (other than road traffic collisions) had significantly increased and this was mainly due to the introduction of the community assistance team (CAT), the emergency medical response trial and also the Service assisting NWP with searching for individuals reported missing from home. It was noted that the CAT assisting people who had fallen in their homes had resulted in 96% not needing any ambulance attention.
- 5.6 **RESOLVED to note the contents of the performance monitoring report.**

#### 6 MONITORING OF INCIDENT-RELATED INFORMATION

- 6.1 The DCFO presented the report which informed members of the progress in re-establishing electronic reporting capability for incident-related information following the recent installation of a new mobilising software system.

- 6.2 The successful installation of a replacement command and control system in March 2017 has impacted on existing arrangements for recording, validating, transmitting and reporting on incident-related data. The system is linked to a number of other, older, systems and all the information needs to be migrated into the new database; this is work in progress and may impact the schedule of quarterly monitoring reports being presented to the Executive Panel.
- 6.3 **RESOLVED to note the information.**
- 7 COLLABORATIVE WORKING
- 7.1 ACFO Brandrick presented the report which informed members of the progress in developing collaborative projects between NWFRS, NWP and the WAST.
- 7.2 Collaborative projects continue to be developed between NWFRS, NWP and WAST through the Tri-Service Collaboration Programme Board. The work of the Board has been organised around three work streams: a) prevent and respond; b) support services; and c) mobilising controls. Significant progress has already been achieved in relation to some areas, notably in the prevent and respond work stream, and work continues to develop in relation to a range of other functions, including estates management and language services, where the potential exists to improve efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness through collaboration.
- 7.3 Members were pleased to note that the WAST has given an undertaking to provide a small number of clinicians to work out of the joint police and fire control room in order to feed into decision making around the need for ambulance deployments; this has proved to be extremely successful.
- 7.4 **RESOLVED to note and welcome the information provided.**
- 8 WELSH LANGUAGE MONITORING REPORT 2016-17
- 8.1 The CFO presented the report which sought members' approval for the NWFRS' Welsh language monitoring report for 2016-17 prior to its formal submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.
- 8.2 Cllr A Davies was concerned about the emphasis on the Welsh language within the Service. It was confirmed that the Service has been committed to providing a bilingual service to the communities across North Wales for many years and is now also bound by the new Welsh Language Standards recently introduced. The Service supports all employees to learn Welsh and improve on their language skills. Also all new recruits and those wishing to join the Service are given as much support as necessary in order to pass the level 2 entry Welsh test as well as additional support being available for those wishing to progress within the Service. To date, not one individual has missed out on the opportunity to join the Service nor to progress in the Service due to the Welsh language test.

- 8.3 Cllr P Lewis commented that the Authority should be proud of the Service's commitment and approach to the Welsh language and that the Welsh Language Commissioner has been complimentary of the Service's work in relation to the Welsh language.
- 8.4 **RESOLVED to note the progress made in relation to the Welsh language within the Service and approve the 2016-17 monitoring report for submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.**
- 9 INCLUSIVE FIRE SERVICE GROUP – IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES
- 9.1 ACFO Simmons presented the report which informed members about the improvement strategies proposed by the Inclusive Fire Service Group led by the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC).
- 9.2 Members noted that the Group, independently chaired by Professor Linda Dickens, had been formed in October 2015 to consider matters relating to equality, diversity and cultural issues such as bullying and harassment. All FRAs in the UK have been asked to consider the proposed strategies in terms of how they can be taken forward in individual Services and also to confirm their support for the proposals. The Authority's response to the NJC circular was appended to the report for members' consideration.
- 9.3 ACFO Simmons detailed the work that is currently being undertaken in NWFRS and listed further actions to be undertaken in order to build upon progress and support the work of the Inclusive Group.
- 9.4 Cllr Pemberton expressed concern about the lack of cost information available. It was noted that this work would be part of the firefighters' pay agreement going forward and it is anticipated that the main resource required will be officer time to work on the project.
- 9.5 In terms of nominating an Authority member to lead on these matters, Cllr P Lewis proposed Cllr Sue Lloyd-Williams due to her experience as a previous Cabinet portfolio holder for social care at Conwy CBC.
- 9.6 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) note the equality, diversity and cultural improvement strategies proposed by the NJC group;**
  - (ii) nominate Cllr Sue Lloyd-Williams to lead on these matters;**
  - (iii) approve the response to Circular NJC/8/17 subject to Cllr S Lloyd-Williams having sight of the document.**
- 10 FUNDING THE COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE TEAM
- 10.1 The DCFO presented the report which gave an update on the work of the Community Assistance Team (CAT) pilot which seeks to assist people who have fallen but are not injured.

- 10.2 Members were informed that the CAT pilot had been extremely successful with 375 people being helped by CAT between 1 August 2016 and 31 March 2017; the latest figure is over 500. The pilot was mainly undertaken in Denbighshire and Flintshire but extended to Wrexham early on in 2017. On 96% of occasions no further support was required from WAST and the CAT attendance time was an average of 26 minutes as opposed to ambulance attendance which could be up to four hours. Members welcomed the positive results of the pilot.
- 10.3 Members were also given an update on the resource and funding situation and were disappointed to note that the Caremore bid had been rejected. They asked the CFO to raise the matter with the Minister and if required a letter be sent to the Welsh Government highlighting the success of the pilot project and to request funding support in order for the project to continue.
- 10.4 Whilst officers sought alternative funding for the CAT project, members were asked to agree that the Authority continues to support the project to the end of the financial year and underpin the costs with £100k from the general reserves.
- 10.5 Some members expressed concern about taking this course of action in view of the risk and budget implications stated in the report and felt that it was putting additional pressure on an already tight budget. However, the CFO explained that it was anticipated to be a temporary measure until funding was identified and also reiterated the fact that the CAT staff had been given a one year contract and would have to be made redundant if the proposal was not agreed. Having discussed the issue at length it was **RESOLVED to support the project for a further six months using earmarked funds from the general reserves and to review the project at that time.**

PART II - Pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public were asked to leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business because it is likely that there would be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 12 to 18 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## 11 FIREFIGHTERS' PAY OFFER

- 11.1 The CFO updated members on the negotiations between the NJC and the FBU in relation to the firefighters' pay offer. The offer put forward was of a 2% pay increase as of 1 July 2017 and a further 3% increase as of 1 April 2018 subject to obtaining funding from the central governments. The FBU's decision on the matter was expected on 24 July; should the offer be rejected the co-responding/EMR work will cease. Members were reminded that the FRA is bound by the decision of the NJC.
- 11.2 **RESOLVED to note the information provided and that an update be sent to members as appropriate.**