

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 18 September 2017 at Conwy County Borough Council Chamber, Bodlondeb, Conwy. Meeting commenced at 10.30am.

Councillor

M Ll Davies (Chair)
B Apsley
B Blakeley
M Bateman
A Davies
A I Dunbar
V Gay
S Glyn
R Griffiths
J B Hughes
P R Lewis
S Lloyd-Williams
G Lowe
R E Parry
P H Pemberton
D Rees
P Shotton
J R Skelland
N Smith
W O Thomas
D Wisinger

Representing

Denbighshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Gwynedd Council
Anglesey County Council
Gwynedd Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Anglesey County Council
Flintshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Flintshire County Council

Also present:

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); C P Everett (Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority); K W Finch (Treasurer to the Authority); D Docx (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); R Simmons, R Fairhead and G Brandrick (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); S Forrest (Accountant, Treasurer's Department, Conwy County Borough Council); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer).

APOLOGIES

Councillor

A Daniels
E W Jones
I D Lloyd
R Roberts
A Tansley
G G Williams

Representing

Gwynedd Council
Anglesey County Council
Gwynedd Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Gwynedd Council

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2017

2.1 The minutes of the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 19 June were submitted for approval.

2.2 **RESOLVED to approve minutes of the meeting as a true and correct record.**

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 There were no matters arising.

4 URGENT MATTERS

4.1 The Chair asked the CFO to update members about the latest on the firefighters' pay offer. Members had been kept informed throughout the negotiations between the NJC and the FBU. Last week, the FBU had refused the latest pay offer of 2% rise as of July 2017 and a potential further 3% rise as of April 2018. NWFRA had budgeted for a 1% increase in 2017-18, however, it is unclear whether the FBU and NJC will reach an agreement for this financial year. It was also noted that as a consequence of the pay negotiations the emergency medical care/co-responding pilot will cease as of 18 September 2017.

4.2 **RESOLVED to note the latest position in relation to the pay offer for firefighters.**

5 CHAIR'S REPORT

5.1 The report listed meetings and events attended by Cllr M LI Davies and Cllr P R Lewis in their roles of Chair and Deputy Chair of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority between June and September 2017.

5.2 The Chair informed members that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Dawn Docx, will be leaving NWFRS in December. The DCFO has been appointed Deputy County Fire Officer at Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. The Chair thanked the DCFO for 11 years of dedicated service which has included managing the Service's budgets during difficult times whilst maintaining excellent service delivery. Members joined the Chair in congratulating the DCFO and wished her well in her new role.

5.3 **RESOLVED to note the information provided.**

6 DRAFT ASSESSMENT OF THE AUTHORITY'S PERFORMANCE IN 2016-17

- 6.1 Members were asked to approve the draft assessment of the Authority's performance together with the annual equality report for 2016-17. The Authority is required under legislation to compile and publish an annual assessment of its performance and equality data and this year the information has been combined into one document.
- 6.2 The DCFO led members through the first part of the document which provided an assessment of how the Authority has discharged its general duty to improve and its progress against the improvement objectives it set itself for last year. It also summarised its performance against specified national and local performance indicators and measures of success. ACFO Simmons then presented the equality data section in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) and the (Wales) Regulations 2011 for fire and rescue authorities in Wales to produce a strategic equality plan every four years and to publish a report on progress towards delivering that plan by 31 March each year.
- 6.3 Members welcomed the document and had the opportunity to ask questions. In terms of the equality data, members were pleased to see the ongoing work with mental health support and also training staff to identify signs of domestic abuse. It was noted that funding had been received for the Blue Light initiative which is a programme of training on mental health issues and staff will be invited to train as mental health champions across the Service. Members thanked officers for the report and the Chief Fire Officer wished to formally thank the document's authors, the Corporate Planning Manager and the Equality Officer, for compiling the comprehensive document.
- 6.4 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) approve the draft assessment of the Authority's performance and progress towards meeting its improvement and equality objectives during 2016-17 for publication by 31 October 2017;**
 - (ii) note that a colourful paper leaflet summarising the Authority's progress towards meeting its improvement objectives will also be published before the end of this year.**

7 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2017-18

- 7.1 The Treasurer presented the report, which gave an estimated provisional outturn for the financial year 2017-18, and explained the variances to various budget headings.
- 7.2 The current estimate is that £229,794 of reserves will be needed to support the budget for 2017-2018. It was noted that this amount could increase if there is severe weather over the winter months.

7.3 As had been requested, the provisional outturn report now includes information about the grants that have been awarded to the Authority for the current financial year. It was noted that officers are still seeking to secure alternative funding in order for the work of the community assistance team (CAT) to continue in the long term. Since CAT was launched in August 2016 it has responded to over 600 calls and in 96% of cases the individual who had fallen did not require hospital attention thereby creating a saving of approximately 900 hours in terms of paramedic time.

7.4 In response to a member's question about the cost of uniform and laundry, it was confirmed that the additional cost was due to the number of new recruits that had joined the Service, all of which required full personal protective equipment and clothing in order to undertake the training.

7.5 **RESOLVED to note the financial position of the Authority.**

8 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2017-18

8.1 The Treasurer presented the report which provided the latest information on the Authority's treasury management and prudential indicators. It was noted that members of the Audit Committee, at its meeting on 11 September 2017, had reviewed the contents in detail and had no major observations nor could find any major risks in the report and would recommend it be approved by the Authority.

8.2 **RESOLVED to approve the amended prudential indicators set out in appendix A of the report.**

9 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2016-17 AND ISA260

9.1 The Treasurer presented the report which asked members to approve the audited statement of accounts for 2016-17 and the annual governance statement. A copy of the Wales Audit Office's audit of financial statements report had also been distributed; Mark Jones and Amanda Hughes from WAO were in attendance to presents its findings to members.

9.2 The Treasurer led members through the report and explained the work involved in drawing up the statement of accounts. It was noted that the report had been considered by the Audit Committee and its members had recommended that the findings from the auditors' report be fully implemented. Cllr Skelland, as Chair of the Audit Committee, confirmed that the statement of accounts had been discussed on 11 September and that the Audit Committee will be scrutinising the procedural changes at its next meeting.

9.3 Mark Jones and Amanda Hughes then led members through the audit of financial statements report highlighting some of the issues they had identified in the Authority's statement of accounts. In conclusion, they confirmed that the Auditor General intended to issue an unqualified audit report on the financial statements.

- 9.4 **RESOLVED to**
(i) approve the audited statement of accounts for 2015-16;
(ii) note that the findings from the audit of financial statements report will be fully implemented.

At this juncture, Cllr D Wisinger left the meeting.

10 CHIEF OFFICERS' PAY AWARD

10.1 The Treasurer presented the report which asked Members to endorse the agreement in respect of the pay award for 2017 that has been reached by the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC). The Treasurer advised that should the Authority decide not to endorse the agreement, it could be in breach of the contract it has with chief officers as the pay award clause is part of chief officers' contracts of employment.

10.2 **RESOLVED to endorse the National Joint Council's decision as noted above.**

11 STANDARDS COMMITTEE: VACANCIES

11.1 The Clerk informed members that the term of office of two members of the Standards Committee was due to end on 31 December 2017. Therefore the Authority will need to recruit two new independent members; Flintshire County Council has a vacancy on its Standards Committee and in the spirit of collaboration and saving money on the recruitment process it has been agreed that NWFRA and Flintshire County Council will share the recruitment process. An interview panel consisting of members from both authorities will be required and thereafter the panel will recommend the successful candidates to the respective authorities for members' endorsement at their December meetings.

11.2 **RESOLVED to**
(i) note the information provided;
(ii) circulate details of the role across all local authorities and their standards committees.

12 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

12.1 The minutes of the following meetings were submitted for information:

- Audit Committee meeting held on 10 July 2017
- Executive Panel meeting held on 17 July 2017.

12.2 **RESOLVED to note the minutes for information.**