

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

Minutes of the Executive Panel Meeting of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on 14 May 2018 at Fire and Rescue Headquarters, St Asaph. Meeting commenced at 2pm.

### PRESENT

#### Councillors:

M Ll Davies (Chair)	Denbighshire County Council
M Bateman	Flintshire County Council
B Blakeley	Denbighshire County Council
A Davies	Denbighshire County Council
V Gay	Flintshire County Council
R Griffiths	Anglesey County Council
P R Lewis	Conwy County Borough Council
R E Parry	Conwy 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); K Finch (Treasurer); G Owens (Deputy Clerk); R Simmons and R Fairhead (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); S Morris and H MacArthur (Assistant Chief Officers); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); P Bass (Secretariat/Minute Taker).

### 1. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Dixon	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr J B Hughes	Gwynedd Council
Cllr E W Jones	Anglesey County Council

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

2.1 None

### 3. NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 The CFO asked to brief members regarding the recent Coroner's Inquest relating to a fire that occurred in Denbigh in August 2017; it was agreed to do this under part II.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2018
  - 4.1 The minutes of the last meeting were submitted for approval.
  - 4.2 **RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true and correct record.**
5. MATTERS ARISING
  - 5.1 A GDPR awareness session for FRA members is scheduled to take place later in the year.
  - 5.2 **RESOLVED to note the information.**
6. GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FRAs IN WALES
  - 6.1 The Chief Fire Officer presented the report which updated members on the latest position in respect of proposed changes to the finance and governance arrangements of fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in Wales.
  - 6.2 Members had previously been made aware that the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services has signalled his intention to change the existing finance and governance arrangements for FRAs in Wales. The joint letter of response from the Chairs of the three FRAs in Wales had been attached to the report for members' information.
  - 6.3 The Chair reported that he had attended a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary and the other Chairs on 30 April. Since that meeting, the Cabinet Secretary had written to all Chairs of FRAs in Wales to inform them that he had arranged for some independent input to facilitate the process of 'shaping the FRAs' finance and governance arrangements' and that meetings will be arranged shortly to take this forward.
  - 6.4 **RESOLVED to note the correspondence and the Chair's update.**
7. IMPROVEMENT AND WELL-BEING PLAN 2019/20
  - 7.1 The CFO introduced the report which summarised the progress made by the Planning Working Group in developing NWFRA's improvement and well-being objectives for 2019/20. Members were also asked to make formal recommendations to the FRA on the approach that it should consider adopting in relation to its longer term financial sustainability.

- 7.2 Members were reminded of the financial situation and that the Authority is facing a budget deficit of approximately £1.89million. Funding this anticipated shortfall has been the focus of the Planning Working Group's meetings over recent weeks.
- 7.3 It was noted that the working group had met on five occasions and had received extensive information on underlying costs and activity. The report to the Executive Panel provided the key issues discussed by the working group and some of the options available to address the budget shortfall for 2019/20.
- 7.4 Members were advised of the risks associated with using unallocated reserves as a short term solution.
- 7.5 Members were asked to also consider the issue around the firefighters' pay offer which is determined at a national level. Within those discussions is the option to significantly extend the remuneration in return for an extension to the firefighter role. This may mean that there could be a necessity to review the size and type of workforce needed.
- 7.6 Cllr R Griffiths noted that paragraph 50 of the report included the option to close one or more retained stations. The CFO confirmed that closing a retained station would need to be considered in the context of providing strategic fire cover and cognisant of the effect of such a decision on the overall risk profile of North Wales.
- 7.7 Cllr P R Lewis sought clarification on what impact an increase of £1.9m would have on contributions from council tax bills for each local authority. ACO MacArthur confirmed that the standard spending assessment (SSA) for each local authority included a fire element based on population. Due to the profile for each local authority and uncertainties around the SSA for 2019/20 it was not possible to determine the amount that would need to be raised from council tax.
- 7.8 Cllr P R Lewis congratulated the author for the comprehensive, informative and easy to read document.

7.9 **RESOLVED**

- (i) to discount, due to the element of risk involved, option (c) which was to increase the combined total contribution from the local authorities by significantly less than £1,898,000 and so requiring significant reductions in fire and rescue services in North Wales;**

- (ii) to recommend to the FRA at its June meeting a draft consultation proposal based on options to address the anticipated shortfall in strategic terms as follows:
  - a) increasing the combined total contribution from the local authorities by an estimated £1,898,000 in 2019/20 and so retaining current levels of fire and rescue services in North Wales; OR
  - b) increasing the combined total contribution from the local authorities by slightly less than £1,898,000 and so retaining the main fire and rescue services in North Wales but requiring some savings to be made;
- (iii) that Cllr P R Lewis be nominated to present the report detailing the Executive Panel's recommendation to the FRA at its June meeting.
- (iv) that Cllr M LI Davies be nominated as reserve to present the report to the FRA at its June meeting.

8. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NWFRA'S IMPROVEMENT AND WELL-BEING PLAN 2019/20

- 8.1 ACO Morris presented the report which outlined proposals for the Authority's 2018 consultation with the public and other stakeholders as part of the process of developing its Improvement and Wellbeing Plan 2019/20.
- 8.2 The Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) is required to publish improvement objectives and to have involved the public and other stakeholders in the process of developing those objectives. It was noted that the strategy is aimed at consulting publicly between July and October 2018; it comprises various aspects in order to reach as wide an audience as possible and the means of engagement will include social media, questionnaire, bilingual video, easier to read leaflets and encouragement of partner organisations and other emergency services to help with sharing the FRA's information.
- 8.3 Members welcomed the strategy and it was **RESOLVED to endorse the public engagement and consultation strategy as outlined in the report for delivery between July and October 2018.**

## 9. STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 ACO Morris presented the report which summarised the content of the Authority's strategic risk register in accordance with the Strategic Risk Management Policy.

9.2 The report summarised the risks contained in the latest version of the confidential register which the Chair and Deputy Chair had sight of on 11 May 2018.

9.3 **RESOLVED to note the identified strategic risks that are facing the Authority.**

## 10. EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

10.1 ACFO Fairhead gave members an update about the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP).

10.2 Members were reminded that the current national radio and data communication system, Airwave, used by the emergency services in the UK was due to end in December 2019. A national replacement project known as the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) has been established by Her Majesty's Government and is being led by the Home Office to deliver a replacement service.

10.3 Members noted the numerous issues and risks that are involved with the national project and that the timescale for implementing a new contract has been delayed significantly. It was agreed that members will be kept informed of any developments.

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

## 11. CORONER'S INQUEST

11.1 The CFO briefed members on the details and outcome of the recent Coroner's Inquest following the tragic incident that occurred in Denbigh during August 2017.

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