

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

Minutes of the Executive Panel Meeting of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at Fire and Rescue Headquarters, St Asaph. Meeting commenced at 2pm.

PRESENT

Cllr S Frobisher (Chair)	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr A M Jones	Anglesey County Council
Cllr L W Davies	Anglesey County Council
Cllr M Ll Davies	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr B Dunn	Flintshire County Council
Cllr G C Evans	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr P Jeffares	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr J V Owen	Anglesey County Council
Cllr T Roberts	Gwynedd Council
Cllr W P Roberts	Conwy County Borough Council

ALSO PRESENT:

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); D Docx (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); C Everett (Clerk); K Finch (Treasurer); P Claydon and R Simmons (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); G Griffiths (Senior Fire Safety Manager); G Brandrick (Senior Operations Manager); R Fairhead (Senior Development Manager); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); S Teal-Bromley (Executive Support Manager); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer).

OBSERVER:

Cllr E C George	Wrexham County Borough Council
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Apologies:

Cllr T Evans	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr G James	Flintshire County Council
Cllr W T Owen	Gwynedd Council
Cllr M Thomas	Conwy County Borough Council
C Hanks	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
L Roberts	Control Manager

1 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

1.1 No urgent items had been submitted to the Chair or Clerk for consideration.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 None.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2011

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February were approved as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Under matters arising, the Chief Fire Officer informed Members about two recent serious incidents in Llandudno and Wrexham. The male occupant at the Llandudno property had suffered serious burns and a male occupant had died at the Wrexham property. Hot spotting campaign had taken place following both incidents.

4.2 The Chief Fire Officer provided further information about the incidents. Members acknowledged the issues raised and were supportive of the Service's continued work in trying to prevent such incidents. In response to a Member's question about partnership working, Members were encouraged to promote partnership working within their own constituent authorities as much as possible.

4.3 The Vice-Chair asked whether it would be helpful to establish a task and finish group to look at ways of maximising the benefits of the data sharing protocols signed by authorities. It was agreed that this could be discussed by the RRP working group that will be reconvened in the summer.

4.4 The Clerk commented that the Deputy Chief Fire Officer had attended a meeting of Flintshire's Community Profile and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee; it had been a good meeting and an effective way of raising the Service's profile and operational issues which had given attendees food for thought.

4.5 **RESOLVED to note the information provided and that there were no other matters arising.**

5 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

5.1 The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that following the Assembly elections, officers will be contacting newly-elected Assembly Members to offer them a briefing on the work of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

6 GORSE FIRES UPDATE

6.1 The Chief Fire Officer updated Members about the recent spate of gorse fires. There had been significant incidents in Bala and Porthmadog. The amount of resources utilised will have an effect on the budget, especially the pay budget, and further information will be provided at the full Authority meeting in June.

6.2 **RESOLVED to note information provided.**

## 7 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 7.1 Members received a presentation on the provisional performance figures for 2010-11. The Corporate Planning Manager led Members through the figures and highlighted the following:
- 7.2 The Service had attended 3,288 fire-related incidents during 2010-11 compared to 3,370 in 2009-10.
- 7.3 The number of secondary fires was higher than the previous year due to a large increase of grass fires in April 2010; the figure had reduced considerably since then but had had an overall effect on the yearly figures. Of the 229 fires in non-domestic properties, 20% were deliberate.
- 7.4 The Service and its partners had undertaken a total of 36,905 home fire safety checks compared to 32,802 in 2009-10.
- 7.5 There had been a significant decrease in the number of fire attended in properties without a smoke alarm. At the time of the Chief Fire Officer's Task Group Report which was initiated in 2006, only about 40% of properties attended had working smoke alarms fitted, compared to 62% of properties in 2010-11. This was considered to be a real achievement for the Authority.
- 7.6 There had been 10 deaths due to accidental dwelling fires, compared to six in the previous year. It was noted that three of the 10 deaths related to one incident. The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that he and his counterparts in Mid and West and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services were concerned about the high number of fire deaths that all three Services were experiencing. They may have reached a point where the prevention work and interventions were not having a significant impact in reducing the number of casualties due to fire, however, this work was preventing an increase in these numbers.
- 7.7 The Service had attended 616 (compared to 767 in 2009-10) road traffic collisions (no fire involved) and 738 other special services (no fire involved), three more than in 2009-10. With regards to special services it was noted that quarter 3 had been the busiest period in the last two years.
- 7.8 Members had previously been informed of the change in the recording system for false alarm calls and that this change was likely to be the reason for the increase in the number of false alarms made with good intent. The Service had attended 30 fewer false alarms overall and 22 fewer malicious false alarm calls.
- 7.9 The Service paid a total of 10,055 invoices during 2010-11 and 94% of these were paid within 30 days.
- 7.10 **RESOLVED to note the provisional figures and information provided.**

## 8 FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES - PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 8.1 The report was presented to advise Members of the performance indicators (PIs) against which fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in Wales will be measured from 2011-12 onwards. The FRAs (Performance Indicators) (Wales) Order 2011 came into force on April 1st 2011, and specifies Strategic Indicators by which FRAs' performance will be measured from 2011-12 onwards.
- 8.2 The new Performance Indicator Framework listed the statutory and supporting ("core") indicators and the recommended areas for developing local performance indicators for 2011-12 onwards. The WAG had recognised that in some policy areas there should be monitoring and measuring of performance, but that different local approaches meant that a national indicator would not be appropriate. The WAG had therefore specified areas where it expected each FRA to adopt local PIs.
- 8.3 The Vice-Chair welcomed the fact that the Assembly recognised that North Wales Fire and Rescue Service delivers fire cover in a rural area and that it was therefore difficult to compare all the performance indicators across Wales. However, he considered that some of the local indicators should be measured on a national basis. Cllr T Roberts shared this view.
- 8.4 It was confirmed that the three Fire and Rescue Authorities could decide on the same local performance indicators if considered suitable. The Chief Fire Officer felt that the Order demonstrated the success of negotiations between the officers from the three Authorities and that the local indicators gave the Authority an element of control as to how its performance is measured.
- 8.5 **RESOLVED to note the arrangements for measuring the performance of Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales.**

## 9 TIMING OF FRAs IMPROVEMENT RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2012-13

- 9.1 The report summarised the timing requirements for producing the 2012-13 Combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan Action Plan, and proposed a timetable to ensure compliance.
- 9.2 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer explained that the Assembly had intended to change the timings of the consultation period for the Authority's Combined Plan so that it would be published in March rather than October. However confirmation was received from WAG officials on 31 March 2011 that they had been unable to obtain the necessary consent to make the changes, and that consequently the existing deadlines would remain in force.
- 9.3 Therefore, the Authority's next Combined Improvement/Risk Reduction Plan for 2012-13 needs to be published by 31 October 2011, preceded by a 12-week public consultation. In order to achieve the deadlines, the consultation on next year's objectives will begin on the day of the Fire Authority meeting (20 June 2011) and end on 9 September. The Executive Panel will then consider a draft Combined Plan in light of the consultation responses in

September, and take forward the final draft of the Combined Plan to the Fire Authority meeting on 17 October 2011.

9.4 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) **note the unanticipated announcement from WAG officials that the October 31 publication deadline would remain for 2011; and**
- (ii) **approve the proposed timetable for producing the Authority's combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan 2012-13.**

10 CONTENT AND CONSULTATION OF THE COMBINED IMPROVEMENT AND RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2012-13

10.1 The report was presented to request Members' approval regarding the proposals for the content of the Combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) 2012-13 and for this year's consultation arrangements.

10.2 In accordance with the Local Government Measure the FRAs are expected to set improvement objectives, for public consultation on an annual basis, to be included in the Combined Plan for publication on 31<sup>st</sup> October. However, the objectives do not have to change every year or be deliverable within one year.

10.3 The Authority's combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan published in October 2010 contained seven improvement objectives resulting in 21 actions, several of which will take more than one year to achieve. Members agreed that the Authority should carry forward the same seven objectives for another year to 2011-12, but with updated action plans.

10.4 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) **approve the proposed content of the draft combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan 2012-13; and**
- (ii) **endorse the proposal to conduct a limited consultation process.**

11 MEMBERSHIP OF THE RISK REDUCTION PLANNING WORKING GROUP

11.1 The report asked Members to nominate membership of the RRP Working Group and to confirm its purpose.

11.2 Members recognised that the RRP Working Group did not need to reconvene for the purpose of discussing objectives for the RRP consultation. However, because of the need to reduce the budget by a further £1million in cash terms it was agreed to convene a Working Group to work through the various options that were stated in the Budget Reduction Options Booklet. Members will have an opportunity to discuss the full implications of the financial effects and the risks involved in those options which will then assist the Executive Panel in making an informed decision during the budget setting process in the Autumn. Also, the RRP Working Group will look at ways of maximising the benefits of the data sharing protocol as suggested by the Vice-Chair earlier in the meeting.

11.3 **RESOLVED**

- (i) to confirm the role of the new Working Group as set out in paragraph 11.2 above;
- (ii) that membership of the Working Group consists of two Members from each constituent authority; and
- (iii) that Members inform the Member Liaison Officer by 16<sup>th</sup> May about which Members will represent their constituent authority.

12 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

12.1 The report was presented to advise Members about the self-assessment exercise being undertaken in preparation for the Annual Governance Statement. The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to report publicly on the extent to which an Authority complies with its own code on an annual basis.

12.2 The Clerk and Deputy Chief Fire Officer had reviewed the work carried out to date on the self-assessment exercise and had made some further recommendations. Once completed, all the findings will be collated to produce the Annual Governance Statement to be included in the Statement of Accounts 2010-11. Progress reports are being provided to the Wales Audit Office and the Internal Audit Team.

12.3 **RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.**

13 WELSH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY 2011-2016 CONSULTATION

13.1 The report was presented to inform Members about:

- (i) the consultation arrangements for the Welsh Assembly Government's proposed Equality and Diversity Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service 2011-2016; and
- (ii) the suggested method for the drafting of the Fire Authorities response to the consultation.

13.2 The draft strategy had been developed collaboratively by the WAG, Chief Fire Officers Association, WLGA and the FRS Equality and Diversity officers. A range of organisations including the Welsh Language Board, Fire Brigades Union, Stonewall Cymru, Networking Women in the Fire Service and the Disabled Firefighters Association had also been involved in producing the strategy.

13.3 The Strategy had been devised to meet the legal requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty 2011. It was noted that responsibility for delivering against the Strategy will rest at three levels - national, local and individual.

13.4 The Welsh language had been referred to in the preamble to the strategy but not in the main report. North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has a good record in promoting the language and part of the response to the

consultation will refer to the benefits of promoting the Welsh language in the strategy.

13.5 Cllr T Roberts felt that the consultation period should be longer and asked that this be included in the consultation response.

13.6 **RESOLVED to**

**(i) note the content of the report; and**

**(ii) give approval to mandate the Chief Fire Officer, in conjunction with the Chair, to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Authority in view of the closing date of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011.**

14 EFFICIENCY AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME BOARD

14.1 The Clerk explained that he would be providing regular updates about the EIP Board at meetings. The Board has been set up nationally to discuss collaboration. North Wales has established a Regional Leadership Board which consists of representatives from the six unitary authorities, Police, Health and Fire and Rescue. Possible areas for collaboration in future include fleet and procurement.

14.2 **RESOLVED to note the information.**

15 COMBINED LONG SERVICE AWARDS AND COMMUNITY AWARDS CEREMONY

15.1 Members were asked to consider combining the Long Service and Community Awards ceremonies in 2011.

15.2 Due to the current economic climate and the need to make significant savings in all areas, combining both events would enable the Authority to recognise staff achievements whilst also being mindful of the expense.

15.3 The costings for such an event had been set out in the report and it was suggested that the combined event take place on Fire and Rescue Service premises at the Rhyl Community Fire and Rescue Station.

15.4 Members agreed that operational and non-operational staff that had provided 20 years' service deserved to be awarded as well as recognising the exceptional effort and notable team achievement within the Service. The Vice-Chair commented that this would be an excellent way of showing the Authority's appreciation to the Service.

15.5 **RESOLVED to endorse the merger of the Long Service Awards and Community Awards ceremonies and that it be held at the Rhyl Community Fire and Rescue Station in September 2011.**