

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

Minutes of the Executive Panel Meeting of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on 20 July 2015 at Fire and Rescue Headquarters, St Asaph. Meeting commenced at 1pm.

PRESENT

Cllr M Ll Davies (Chair)	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr L W Davies	Anglesey County Council
Cllr R Davies	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr B Dunn	Flintshire County Council
Cllr R J Dutton	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr P R Lewis	Conwy County Borough Council
Cllr G Lowe	Wrexham County Borough Council
Cllr R E Parry	Conwy County Borough Council

ALSO PRESENT:

S A Smith (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); K Finch (Treasurer); G Owens (Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer); D Docx (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); R Fairhead and R Simmons (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); G W Griffiths (Senior Development Manager); S Morris (Corporate Planning Manager); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer).

1 APOLOGIES

Cllr R O Jones	Anglesey County Council
Cllr H McGuill	Flintshire County Council
Cllr P W Owen	Denbighshire County Council
Cllr W R Owen	Gwynedd Council
Cllr W T Owen	Gwynedd Council
Cllr A Tansley	Conwy County Borough Council

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

2.1 None

3 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 None

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 MAY 2015

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 There were no matters arising.

6 PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2014-15

6.1 The DCFO introduced the performance monitoring report for the year 2014-15, and highlighted the following to members:

- More people had been able to escape unharmed without assistance, this was considered to be partly attributable to the early warning of the smoke alarm and that more people had a rehearsed escape plan tailored to their needs.
- The report stated that there had been three fatalities due to accidental dwelling fires, however, the Coroner had since confirmed that the cause of death in the November 2014 incident was not due to the fire. Therefore the revised number is now two fatalities.
- It was pleasing to note that the number of dwellings where a fire had occurred but that had no smoke alarm was at its lowest ever, and this was considered attributable to the prevention work undertaken by NWFRS.
- Of the 27,532 home fire safety checks that had been done during the year, 36.7% of those had been completed following a referral from a partner organisation; this exceeded the Service's own 30% target.
- There had been a reduction in the total number of incidents attended compared to the previous year. However there had been an increase in the number of fires in non-domestic premises – this was the first increase in this category since 2009/10, but it was noted that there were now more non-domestic premises in North Wales.
- There had been an increase in the total number of false alarm calls received. However, it was expected that the Service's change in policy on attending AFAs in non-domestic premises will make a difference to this figure in 2015-16 and beyond.

6.2 Members were pleased with the performance of the Service and asked that their appreciation be passed on to all staff of NWFRS.

6.3 **RESOLVED to note the performance monitoring report for 2014-15.**

7 IMPROVEMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP UPDATE

7.1 The CFO explained that the IP working group had been meeting on a regular basis since March 2015 to consider improvement objectives for 2016-17. Members had received several presentations on the risk review and had started considering budget implications for future years.

7.2 Having considered all the information received, the working group now recommended the following improvement objectives to the Executive Panel:

Improvement Objective 1 - To help to keep people and communities safe by preventing deaths and injuries from accidental fires in living accommodation.

Improvement Objective 2 - Recognising the anticipated reduction in local government funding, the Authority will develop a 3 year financial strategy in which freezing the budget will be a central principle.

Improvement Objective 3 - Rebalance our resources to match risk. We will implement a new model of resourcing which will provide a minimum of 20 fire stations available in North Wales at times of relatively lower risk and a minimum of 38 available at times of relatively higher risk.

Improvement Objective 4 - Explore opportunities to diversify the role of the firefighter and offer additional services to the public of North Wales.

7.3 The consultation period will close in December 2015. The Treasurer commented that the Authority may need to have an extraordinary meeting in late December or early January to discuss the Authority's budget for 2016/17 following the end of the consultation period and the budget settlement announcement which is also due in December 2015.

7.4 Members requested that the draft improvement objectives be shared with all members of the Authority prior to the consultation document being issued and that officers meet with stakeholders as part of the consultation exercise.

7.5 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) recommend the draft improvement objectives, as above, to the Authority;**
- (ii) note that the draft consultation document will be published for 12 weeks following the Authority meeting on 21 September 2015.**

8 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION IN SUPPORT OF THE COMBINED IMPROVEMENT AND RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2016-17

8.1 ACFO Simmons presented the report which provided information on the various methods of consultation and public engagement that could be undertaken in order to inform the design of the 2016-17 improvement plan.

8.2 Members noted the improved response to the 2015-16 consultation document, compared to previous years, and considered 291 responses to be a success. Members welcomed the intention to build on last year's consultation strategy, and noted the increasing use of social media and the new trend in using video clips to convey messages. However, members requested that officers be mindful of those who have no access to computers and were pleased to note that hard copies are distributed to all libraries in North Wales.

- 8.3 **RESOLVED to**
- (i) **note the success of the 2015-16 public engagement and consultation strategy;**
 - (ii) **endorse the principle that the methodologies to be utilised for the 2016-17 strategy must seek to further increase or improve responses and to reflect the nature of the objectives once agreed by the Authority.**

9 COUNTRYSIDE AND GRASS FIRES SUMMIT MEETING

9.1 ACFO Fairhead presented the report which informed members of the recent countryside and grass fires summit meeting convened by the First Minister following the large number of such fires attended by the fire and rescue services in Wales in April 2015.

9.2 Although the number of countryside and grass fires in North Wales during spring 2015 was broadly comparable with previous years, there had been a significant increase in publicity surrounding such fires across South Wales. The WG had therefore called a meeting to consider a plan in order to deal with the issue.

9.3 In addition to co-operating with the WG on the action plan issued, it was noted that the Service will continue to work with North Wales Police and the Arson Reduction Team to target young people as part of its prevention work in promoting the dangers of deliberate fire setting. The Service will also continue to promote the telephone number for people to call to notify Control that they will be undertaking controlled burning.

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

10 EMERGENCY SERVICE MOBILE COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME

10.1 The DCFO presented the report which updated members on the progress of the Emergency Service Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and to remind members of the potential risks of this national project involving all the emergency services across the UK.

10.2 Members expressed concern about the issues raised in the report. It was noted that officers are working with WG officials to develop the business case for continuing the grant until Wales has moved onto ESMCP by 2019.

10.3 **RESOLVED to note the information provided and the risks associated with this national project.**

11 WELSH LANGUAGE MONITORING REPORT

11.1 ACFO Fairhead presented the report which sought approval for the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Scheme Monitoring Report for 2014-15 prior to formal submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

11.2 Cllr L W Davies welcomed the report and the Service's continued commitment to the Welsh language. Cllr Davies also commented that it was pleasing that so many staff were Welsh speakers. Members queried the number of Standards that the Welsh Commissioner imposes on the public authorities and the resulting work in collating all the data and information and whether it was necessary and appropriate. Officers confirmed that a gap analysis is currently being undertaken to identify any areas where the Service does not meet the necessary Standards.

11.3 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) **note the progress made in relation to the Authority's Welsh language scheme; and**
- (ii) **approve the 2014-15 monitoring report prior to formal submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.**

12 JOINT WELSH LANGUAGE PROTOCOL WITH NORTH WALES POLICE

12.1 The report sought members' approval for a joint Welsh language protocol between North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and North Wales Police.

12.2 ACFO Fairhead explained that the protocol is an extension of the existing collaboration between both organisations and reflects the continued commitment towards the Welsh language including the learning, awareness and development aspects.

12.3 **RESOLVED to note the contents and approve the joint Welsh language protocol between North Wales Police and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.**

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.

13 INDUSTRIAL ACTION

13.1 The CFO advised members that, although the dispute continues, there had been no further periods of industrial action nor any escalation or change and therefore proposed to remove the item from future agendas. Should there be any further development, the item can be re-introduced.

13.2 **RESOLVED to agree that the item be removed from future Authority agendas.**