

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE PANEL

Minutes of the **Executive Panel** of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 18 March 2024, virtually via Zoom. Meeting commenced at 14.00hrs.

Councillor

Cllr Dylan Rees (Chair)
Cllr Paul Cunningham (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Carol Beard
Cllr Chrissy Gee
Cllr Alan Hughes (left 14:50)
Cllr Chris Hughes (from 14:23)
Cllr John Ifan Jones
Cllr Rondo Roberts
Cllr Paul Rogers
Cllr Gareth Sandilands (from 14:36)
Cllr Rob Triggs

Representing

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

Also present:

Dawn Docx
Stewart Forshaw
Helen MacArthur
Justin Evans
Dafydd Edwards
Tracey Williams
Gareth Owens
George Jones
Lisa Allington

Chief Fire Officer
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Treasurer
Head of Corporate Communications
Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Atebol - Translator
Executive Assistant

1 **APOLOGIES**

Councillor

Cllr Gareth A Roberts
Cllr Dale Selvester

Representing

Gwynedd County Council
Flintshire County Council

ABSENT

Councillor

Representing

CFO Docx reported on events which had taken place over the last month in relation to the cultural aspects associated with the sector.

The CFO noted that on 26 February, the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership, Hannah Blythyn, had announced an intervention with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) in that the Fire Authority had been removed and Commissioners would be put in place by the Welsh Government with terms of reference to improve its culture. It was also necessary to appoint an interim Chief Fire Officer.

Immediately following that announcement, the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor for Wales, Dan Stephens, had contacted both North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) in order to ascertain whether there were any senior officers who may be interested in assuming the role of Interim Chief Fire Officer at SWFRS, working under the commissioners. ACFO Stuart Millington had expressed an interest in this role and was subsequently appointed. Within NWFRS, Justin Evans has been appointed to the vacant role of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) for the duration of the secondment of Stuart Millington.

In March, proposals for independent oversight of the progress of NWFRS and MAWWFRS in the cultural reforms had been jointly developed by the Service and MAWWFRS and provided to the Deputy Minister. This proposal included assessment of the position and progress against the findings of other reviews within the sector including South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, and to ensure that priorities were identified for further action. It is currently proposed that the same reviewer would be used at both NWFRS and MAWWFRS.

The Deputy Minister had subsequently delivered a statement advising that this would take place; however, funding would need to be provided by the services involved and may cost up to £0.5m.

Alongside this, ITV Wales had been running a story regarding alleged complaints within the Service. The CFO confirmed her concern for any member of staff who is experiencing poor behaviours and has reached out to and encouraged colleagues to report any poor behaviours being experienced.

On 11 March, the Chair and the CFO provided evidence to the Equality and Social Partnership Forum at the Senedd in Cardiff.

A Member queried why funding was not being provided by the Welsh Government. The Chair noted that the review was not KC led and so it was likely to cost less than the estimate of £500,000.

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest to record.

3.0 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 There was no notice of urgent matters.

4.0 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2023

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2023 were submitted for approval.

4.2 RESOLVED to:

- i) approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting held.**

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 The Treasurer noted that the last meeting had set the budget and at that time, there were uncertainties with regards to funding for the pensions. He had travelled to Cardiff at the weekend and had been advised that the UK Government would be providing funding to the Welsh Government to support with the increased pensions costs, although the amount of funding to be received was as yet unknown.

5.2 The Chair noted paragraph 7.3 Which referred to sickness absence levels and asked if a mechanism had been put in place to monitor these against other Fire and Rescue Services of a similar size. It was advised that this data was now included within the Performance Monitoring Report, but on a National basis. The Chair requested that Audit Wales be asked for their guidance in this area and it be reported to a future meeting.

6.0 COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024-29 AND COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2024-25

6.1 DCFO Forshaw presented the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-29 and Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2024-25 report which aimed to present to Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) the Community Risk Management Plan for the five-year period 2024 to 2029; the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan for 2024-25; and to seek approval to consult with the public on our proposed five year and one-year plans.

6.2 A Member asked that, once this plan had been approved, it be woven into business as usual practices in order to fully embed it.

6.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) Note the content of the report; and**
- ii) Approve the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2024-29 and the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan (CRMIP) 2024-25 for consultation with Authority Members, staff, relevant stakeholders and the public prior to approval at a full meeting of the Authority in July 2024.**

7.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT Q3, 23-24

- 7.1 Area Manager Anthony Jones presented the Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 3, 23/24 which provided information about incident activity during the first three quarters of the 2023/24 financial year, performance in relation to the Authority improvement and well-being objectives, and other notable incident activity.
- 7.2 A Member asked what the increase in HMP Berwyn could be attributed to, and it was responded that they were in relation to deliberate fires. This was likely due to the increase in prison population as the prison was almost at capacity; however, a new Senior Health, Safety and Fire Advisor was now in post within the prison and they were being engaged with in order to enhance prevention work in that area.
- 7.3 A Member asked if there had been any boost in numbers with regards to recruitment of retained firefighters and responded that this information was not immediately available; however, it would be sourced and issued following the meeting. It was confirmed that there had been a net increase across the Service, over and above the replacement of the natural wastage that the Service was already aware of.
- 7.4 The Chair requested that a breakdown of RDS availability across the Service on a daily basis be provided to Members in order that they could assess the effectiveness of the RDS provision. It was confirmed that this would be provided.

7.5 RESOLVED to:

- i) Members note the content of the performance monitoring report.**

8.0 DRAFT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2024-29

- 8.1 ACFO Justin Evans presented the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-29 paper which provided Members with details of the Service's commitments relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and set out proposals on how to meet them.
- 8.2 It was confirmed that a number of expressions of interest had been received from Members with regards to becoming EDI Champion, and the successful nominee would be announced soon.
- 8.3 A Member asked if the Unions had been involved in the compilation of the strategy and it was confirmed that they had, via the regular EDI Committee meetings.

8.4 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the content of the report; and**
- ii) Approve the draft EDI Strategy for consultation with Fire Authority Members, staff and relevant stakeholders prior to approval at the meeting of the Fire Authority in April 2024.**

9.0 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

9.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the Pay Policy Statement paper which aimed to inform Members of their responsibilities arising from the Localism Act 2011 (the Act).

9.2 Members were advised that this was an annual document which was required to be published each year.

9.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) note the requirements of the Localism Act 2011; and endorse the Pay Policy Statement for the 2024/25 financial year.**

10 URGENT MATTERS

10.1 There were no urgent matters to raise.

Meeting closed: 14:53 hrs