

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 19 March 2018 at Conwy County Borough Council Chamber, Bodlondeb, Conwy. Meeting commenced at 10.30am.

Councillor

M Ll Davies (Chair)
B Blakeley
M Bateman
A Daniels
A Davies
M Dixon
A I Dunbar
V Gay
S Glyn
R Griffiths
J B Hughes
E W Jones
P R Lewis
S Lloyd-Williams
G Lowe
R E Parry
D Rees
R Roberts
P Shotton
J R Skelland
A Tansley
W O Thomas
G G Williams
D Wisinger

Representing

Denbighshire County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Gwynedd Council
Denbighshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Gwynedd Council
Anglesey County Council
Gwynedd Council
Anglesey County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Anglesey County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Gwynedd 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); R Simmons and R Fairhead (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); S Morris (Assistant Chief Officer); J Brown (Head of Finance); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); S Forrest (Accountant, Treasurer's Department, Conwy County Borough Council); A Davies (Member Liaison Officer).

APOLOGIES

Councillor

B Apsley

Representing

Wrexham County Borough Council

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1.1 There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2017

2.1 The minutes of the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 18 December were submitted for approval.

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

3 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Community Assistance Team – the CFO informed members that the Authority had been successful in securing £46k revenue from WG in order to meet the FRA's costs for continuing with the project until the end of May. However, unless sustainable funding is secured from an external source the project will cease at the end of May when the employees' contracts expire; the unit will be disbanded and the employees made redundant. Members expressed great disappointment that no external funding had been forthcoming. The CFO confirmed that he will write to the Minister to make him aware of the situation; members were supportive of this approach and asked that their concerns about such a valuable service being lost be noted in the letter. The Clerk confirmed that he would discuss other potential funding avenues with the CFO outside the meeting.

3.2 Budget 2018/19 – the Clerk confirmed that the delegated powers had not been necessary and the budget remained as approved by members at the December 2017 meeting.

4 URGENT MATTERS

4.1 There were no urgent matters.

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 January and March 2018.

5.2 Cllr Shotton took the opportunity to thank the Phoenix team for their hard work with the young people and commented that it is a pleasure to attend the ceremonies of achievement held at the end of the weekly course.

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

6 APPROVAL OF DRAFT LOCAL WELL-BEING PLANS OF THE NORTH WALES PUBLIC SERVICES BOARDS

6.1 The report was presented in order for members to approve the draft local well-being plans of the four North Wales Public Services Boards (PSBs).

6.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 placed a duty on PSBs to prepare and publish their first local well-being plans by 3 May 2018. NWFRA is a statutory partner of the PSBs and therefore the local well-being plans must be approved by the individual statutory members of the PSBs that prepared them, and also by the PSBs themselves, prior to them being published.

- 6.3 Members received an overview of each of the four PSBs plans which were presented to them as follows:
- (i) Conwy and Denbighshire's plan was presented by Cllr Gareth Jones, member of the PSB;
 - (ii) Gwynedd and Môn's plan was presented by Ffion Johnstone, Chair of the PSB;
 - (iii) Flintshire's plan was presented by Colin Everett, Chair of the PSB; and
 - (iv) Wrexham's plan was presented by Lyndsey Rawlinson, Chair of the PSB.
- 6.4 Members congratulated all PSBs on producing the plans and look forward to seeing them come into fruition in the future, with collaborative working highlighted as an essential part of the plans. The Clerk commented that due to the nature of the plans they will change and be updated over time.
- 6.5 **RESOLVED to approve the four PSB plans as presented, however, should any of the plans be amended after approval by the Authority but before being published by the PSB, members authorise the Chief Fire Officer to decide on behalf of the Authority whether the amendments are of sufficient significance as to require re-presentation to the Authority for further consideration.**

At this juncture, Cllr J B Hughes left the meeting.

7 DRAFT IMPROVEMENT AND WELL-BEING PLAN 2018-19

- 7.1 ACO Morris presented the draft Improvement and Well-being Plan 2018-19 to members for approval in order for it to be published by 31 March 2018 in accordance with the legislation.
- 7.2 **RESOLVED to approve the draft Improvement and Well-being Plan 2018-19 for publication on the Authority's website before the end of March 2018.**

8 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2017-2018

- 8.1 The Treasurer presented the report which provided members with an estimated provisional outturn for the financial year 2017-2018.
- 8.2 Members noted that the current indications are that there will be no underspend and £215,385 of reserves will be needed to support the budget for 2017-2018; this includes the revision to the MRP policy that was approved by members at the December FRA meeting. In response to a member's query about firefighters' pay, it was confirmed that negotiations are continuing at national level.
- 8.3 **RESOLVED to note the financial position of the Authority.**

At this juncture, Councillors A I Dunbar, P Shotton and D Wisinger left the meeting.

9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2018/19

9.1 The Treasurer presented the report to members detailing the prudential indicators, treasury management strategy, investment strategy and minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy for 2018/19.

9.2 The report was presented to the Audit Committee on the 29 January 2018 in order for its members to review the contents before submission to the Fire and Rescue Authority. Following a presentation highlighting the key areas of the report members of the Audit Committee recommended the report for approval by the Fire and Rescue Authority.

9.3 **RESOLVED to approve each of the three key elements noted in the report as set out below:**

- (i) the Prudential Indicators;**
- (ii) the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19;**
- (iii) the Investment Strategy.**

10 GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FRAs IN WALES

10.1 The CFO presented the report in order to make members aware of developments in the Welsh Government's plan to revise the financial and governance arrangements of fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in Wales.

10.2 The Welsh Government has expressed a clear intention to make revisions to the existing finance and governance arrangements of Welsh FRAs. The Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services has written to the three FRA Chairs setting out his concerns and inviting views on how these concerns could be addressed. Currently, the timescales for introducing any revisions were unknown.

10.3 It was noted that the three FRAs will be submitting a joint response to the letter received from Alun Davies AM.

10.4 **RESOLVED to**

- (i) note the contents of the Cabinet Secretary's 21 February 2018 letter;**
- (ii) require the Chair, Deputy Chair, Chief Fire Officer, Clerk and Treasurer to work with the other two FRAs in Wales on a co-ordinated joint response; and,**
- (iii) note that Members will be kept informed of progress and any further developments.**

11 FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEMES ADDITIONAL PENSION BENEFITS (APB)

11.1 The CFO presented the report which informed members of current issues arising regarding the treatment of temporary promotion payments under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS 1992).

11.2 Members were also required to determine whether temporary promotion payments made to members of the FPS 1992 should be deemed to be pensionable and treated as Additional Pension Benefits or classified as non-pensionable payments.

- 11.3 It was noted that the Fire and Rescue Authority is required under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) Regulations to make decisions on matters relating to the administration of the firefighters' pension schemes. The Authority is required to make a decision regarding the treatment of temporary promotion payments; the decision will then be incorporated into the Discretionary Policy which is to be reviewed in June.
- 11.4 Members were of the view that the temporary promotion payments to members of the FPS 1992 pension scheme should be deemed pensionable and noted that the effective date will be discussed with the trade unions and is likely to be as soon as practicably possible.
- 11.5 **RESOLVED to:**
(i) note the information provided; and
(ii) approve that temporary promotion payments made to members of the FPS 1992 should be deemed to be pensionable and treated as additional pension benefits.

12 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

- 12.1 The Treasurer presented the report which sought members' approval for the pay policy statement for 2018/19.
- 12.2 It was noted that the Authority is required to produce a pay policy statement on an annual basis under Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011. The statement complies with the revised guidance notes for 'Transparency of Senior Pay in the Devolved Welsh Public Sector' compiled by the Public Services Staff Commission.
- 12.3 **RESOLVED to approve the pay policy statement for the coming financial year 2018/19.**

13 THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

- 13.1 The Clerk presented the report which asked members to note and approve the Standards Committee's annual report.
- 13.2 The Clerk explained that due to the adverse weather, the Committee had in fact met on 14 March 2018 and therefore members were asked to note that the paragraph on complaints against members of the Fire and Rescue Authority now read as follows:

"There were no complaints about FRA members during this period. However, there have been concerns expressed about FRA members' attendance at meetings and this will be reviewed at the Standards Committee meeting in September 2018."

13.3 The other amendment to be noted was that those present at the meeting were:

Antony P Young
Sally Ellis
Julia Hughes
Councillor Owen Thomas

13.4 **RESOLVED to note the above and approve the Standards Committee's annual report.**

14 CLERK/MONITORING OFFICER SLA: EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

14.1 The CFO informed members that the service level agreement between the Authority and Flintshire County Council for the provision of the services of clerk/monitoring officer and legal advice for the Authority had expired. Proposals will be submitted to the Executive Panel in order to review the agreement.

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

15 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

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

- Audit Committee meeting held on 29 January 2018
- Executive Panel meeting held on 12 February 2018.

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