

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Executive Panel

Minutes of the Executive Panel meeting of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Friday 29 July 2022 via Zoom. Meeting commenced at 2pm.

Present

Councillors:

D Rees (Chair)	Anglesey County Council
P Cunningham (Deputy Chair)	Flintshire County Council
K Taylor	Anglesey County Council
C Beard	Conwy County Borough Council
C Gee	Flintshire County Council
R Triggs	Gwynedd Council
P Rogers	Wrexham County Borough Council

Also Present

D Docx (Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive); G Owens (Clerk); D Edwards (Treasurer); S Forshaw (Deputy Chief Fire Officer); R Fairhead, ~ H MacArthur and S Millington (Assistant Chief Fire Officers); S Morris (Assistant Chief Officer); T Williams (Corporate Communications Manager); A Davies (Members' Liaison Officer).

1 APOLOGIES

A Hughes	Denbighshire County Council
G A Roberts	Gwynedd Council
R Roberts	Wrexham County Borough Council
D Selvester+	Flintshire County Council

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 None.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2022

4.1 The minutes of the Executive Panel meeting held on 14 February 2022 were submitted for approval.

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

5 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 There were no matters arising.

5.2 **RESOLVED to note the update.**

6 BROADENING THE ROLE OF THE FIREFIGHTER IN WALES - FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CAPACITY – THEMATIC REVIEW

6.1 The Chief Fire Officer presented the report which provided an overview of the Thematic Review of the Fire and Rescue Services' capacity to assume a broader role for firefighters in Wales. This was produced by the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor to Welsh Government, Dan Stephens, and published on 5 December 2021.

6.2 Members were informed that in March 2021, the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership and the then Minister for Health and Social Services, informed the Senedd of plans to develop a broader role for firefighters in Wales, in support of the NHS in Wales. Thereafter the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector for Wales undertook a thematic review to provide assurance that the three Welsh FRSs had the capacity to carry out any additional work arising from broadening of the firefighters' role without detriment to core services. The outcome of the review was published in December 2021.

6.3 In the following six months there has been on-going dialogue between the Chief Fire Officers in Wales and Welsh Government Officials. On 8 July 2022 the Deputy Minister wrote to the Chairs of the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales to ask for written confirmation, by 31 August 2022, as to whether they accept the review's findings and how they intend to progress the recommendations. These recommendations related to reviewing existing shift systems, analysing station work routines and also consideration of increasing capacity within the mobilising system.

6.4 The Chair informed Members that the same report had been presented to the Audit Committee on the morning of 29 July and its consensus had been to support the concept of broadening the role as long as it did not affect core services delivered by firefighters. This was reiterated by all Members. In terms of reviewing shift patterns, Members noted that this proposal will be undertaken as part of the forthcoming Fire Cover Review.

6.5 The Treasurer commented that as the Authority faces a period of transition and taking into account that inflation was at its highest level for many years, the Authority will need to consider the impact of all these elements on the Authority's budget and careful prioritisation will be required to ensure any changes remain affordable and equitable.

6.6 **RESOLVED to note:**

- (i) **the publication of “Broadening of the role of firefighters in Wales. 2021 Thematic Review report by the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor and Inspector for Wales”**
- (ii) **the subsequent correspondence from the Deputy Minister to the Chair of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and authorise that a response should be written from the Chair, in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer, reflecting Members’ views and sent to the Deputy Minister by 31 August 2022.**

7 PERFORMANCE MONITORING APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022

- 7.1 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report which provided information about incident activity during the 2021/22 financial year; performance in relation to the Authority's improvement and well-being objectives; and other notable incident activity.
- 7.2 It was noted that during the 2021/22 financial year the Service attended:
- 5,354 emergency incidents. These have increased by 13.9% compared with the same period in 2020/21. The increase was driven primarily by a 56% increase in attendances at special services non-fire emergencies (958).
 - 399 accidental dwelling fires at which 34 people sustained slight injuries, five people sustained serious injuries, and five people lost their lives;
 - 207 road traffic collisions, 71 of which required crews to release or extricate people from vehicles;
 - 2,517 false alarms, which included a 15.2% increase in attendances to false alarms from automatic fire alarm (AFA) systems.
- 7.3 During this period the Service also completed 14,062 Safe and Well Checks, which was 2,721 more than in the previous financial year (11,341).
- 7.4 The Chair commented that it was pleasing to note that the fires at Berwyn Prison had reduced from 47 to 22 and this was considered to be in part due to the partnership working between the Service and the prison.
- 7.5 Members requested future reports contain information on environmental-related incidents such as wildfires and flooding and water incidents; this would also link in with the Authority's work on sustainability.
- 7.6 **RESOLVED to note the contents of the performance monitoring report.**