

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of **North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority** held on **Monday 20 July 2026** virtually via **Teams**. Meeting commenced at **09.30**.

Councillor

Dylan Rees (Chair)
Mark Young (Deputy Chair)
Bryan Apsley
Tina Claydon
Paul Cunningham (left 10:30)
Ann Davies
Jeff Evans
Chrissy Gee
Ian Hodge
Alan Hughes
Chris Hughes
John Brynmor Hughes
Gareth R Jones
John Ifan Jones
Charlie McCoubrey
Gwynfor Owen (left 11:03)
Beverley Parry-Jones (left 11:30)
Arwyn Herald Roberts
Austin Roberts
Rondo Roberts
Gareth Sandilands
Dale Selvester
Gareth Williams (left 10:28)
Siân Williams (left 10:19)
Antony Wren

Representing

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

Also present:

Dawn Docx
Justin Evans
Helen MacArthur
Anthony Jones
Dafydd Edwards
Gareth Owens
Matt Powell
Elgan Roberts
Steve Morris
Llinos Evans
Heledd Davies
Ffion Evans
Lisa Allington

Chief Fire Officer (CFO)
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)
Treasurer
Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Head of Finance and Procurement
Head of ICT
Head of Corporate Communications
Atebol Translation Services
Executive Assistant
Members' Services

1 APOLOGIES

Name

Paul Rogers
Carol Beard

Representing

Wrexham County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council

The above apologies were offered and accepted.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1. There were no declarations of interest declared.

3 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

- 3.1 CFO Docx (CFO) advised Members that since the early hours of 12 July 2026, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) had been responding to a number of significant wildfires. A Major Incident had been declared due to the number of simultaneous incidents and the significant demand placed on operational resources, which was stood down again on Monday 13 July 2026.
- 3.2 Crews continued to respond to wildfire incidents across the region, the most significant being near Harlech, and a multi-agency response group had been initiated. Approximately 2,000 acres had been affected, with a fire front spanning around two kilometres. Operational crews continued to take action to limit the spread of the fire with multiple crews in attendance.
- 3.3 Firefighting efforts remained a challenge due to the significant area of land inaccessible by foot or vehicle. The Service was working closely with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to contain the spread of the fire. A request for aerial support has been accepted, and deployment was expected this week, although delays had been experienced due to demand from wildfire incidents elsewhere across the UK. Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) support had also been considered; however, there was currently no military capability available to assist.
- 3.4 The CFO wished to place on record her sincere thanks to firefighters, firefighters Control, corporate teams and partner agencies who had worked tirelessly throughout this period of sustained operational activity.
- 3.5 Members echoed the CFO's comments giving sincere thanks to all staff involved in the response, recognising their dedication, courage and professionalism during this challenging period, and acknowledging the support provided to local communities.

- 3.6 A Member expressed concern regarding limited support from partner agencies and sought assurance on future planning and preparedness in response to the increasing risk of wildfires. The CFO confirmed that multi-agency work in this area continued.

4 MINUTES OF THE NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2026

- 4.1 The minutes of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) meeting held on 20 April 2026 were submitted for approval.
- 4.2 The minutes were proposed as an accurate reflection of the proceedings of the meeting. This was seconded with all in favour.
- 4.3 The Chair referred Members to paragraph 4.3 of the previous minutes regarding proposed changes to Fire and Rescue Authority governance in Wales.
- 4.4 Members noted the previous Welsh Government's proposal to implement revised Fire and Rescue Authority governance arrangements in South Wales first, with Cabinet Members and independent appointees forming the Authority, before extending arrangements across Mid and West Wales and North Wales.
- 4.5 The Chair advised Members that a written statement issued by the Cabinet Secretary on 13 July 2026 confirmed that Commissioners would remain in place in South Wales until after May 2027. Members noted that the statement did not provide any update on future governance arrangements for Mid and West Wales or North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.
- 4.6 CFO Docx (CFO) advised Members that the Service had been notified of the Cabinet Secretary's statement and had subsequently engaged with Welsh Government officials. Members noted that the revised governance arrangements for all three Fire and Rescue Authorities are now expected to be implemented simultaneously in July 2027. It was also anticipated that the appointment of additional members would be deferred until 2027.
- 4.7 The Monitoring Officer advised Members that discussions had taken place with their counterparts in South and Mid and West Wales. Members noted that a number of questions remained regarding the proposed governance arrangements, with the governance model yet to be confirmed. The Monitoring Officer emphasised the importance of considering alternative arrangements should further delays arise.

- 4.8 A Member expressed concern on the ongoing uncertainty surrounding future governance arrangements. It was felt that significant questions remained unanswered, and that continued engagement with the Cabinet Secretary was needed to emphasise the importance of providing clarity and progressing the proposed changes.
- 4.9 The Monitoring Officer advised Members that the new Fire and Rescue Authority would comprise nine members, including six Cabinet Members. Members noted that the Authority's membership was not expected to be confirmed until June 2027.
- 4.10 The Chair provided Members with an update on paragraph 11.3 of the previous minutes. Members were advised by ACFO MacArthur that the Grey Book pay award had been agreed at 3.8% and had been processed in the July payroll. Negotiations on the Green Book pay award remained ongoing.

4.11 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **Approve the FRA minutes from 20 April 2026 as a true and correct record of the meeting held.**

5 CHAIR'S REPORT

- 5.1 It was noted that a written paper had been provided to Members to inform them on the meetings and events attended by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority in their official capacities between April and June 2026.

5.2 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **Note the information provided within the paper.**

6 HWB AWEN TRAINING CENTRE UPDATE

- 6.1 ACFO Evans delivered the Hwb Awen Training Centre paper which updated Members on the key risks associated with the Hwb Awen Training Centre project, the mitigations in place, and the actions underway to secure funding and maintain appropriate programme control.
- 6.2 Members noted that the Service had been unable to secure all required funding for the Hwb Awen project from a single source. As a result, a blended funding approach is being explored, including grant funding, low-interest borrowing and capital contributions from partners.
- 6.3 Members were advised that no funding commitment was being sought at this stage; however, should external funding opportunities not materialise, alternative options, including potential support from Local Authorities, would be brought back for consideration through the Authority's established budget scrutiny and budget-setting processes.

- 6.4 ACFO Evans assured Members that the project was being progressed by an experienced team, with a continued focus on managing risks and protecting the Authority's financial position.
- 6.5 The Chair noted that a number of Members had attended the Service's Benefit Workshop and commented on the positive experience. ACFO Evans advised that over 40 partner agencies were present, providing valuable opportunities to strengthen relationships and improve understanding of how the Service can support partner organisations and work collaboratively.
- 6.6 The Members' Champion for the Training Centre Project provided further assurance to Members that they would continue to receive timely updates as the project progresses through the next stages of governance and procurement. Appreciation to the staff and project team for their ongoing work and commitment in supporting the Hwb Awen project was also expressed.
- 6.7 A Member raised concerns regarding the financing of the project and sought assurance on how the remaining funding requirements would be met without relying on contributions from Local Authorities.
- 6.8 ACFO MacArthur acknowledge members concerns and provided further assurance that budget scrutiny working group work had dedicated a specific meeting to reviewing detailed financial modelling for the Training Centre project. Members were advised that all funding options were being thoroughly evaluated and that this work would inform future budget proposals, which would continue to be considered through the Budget Scrutiny Working Group.
- 6.9 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) **Note the current risks and mitigations associated with the Hwb Awen Training Centre project;**
 - ii) **Note the proposed adjustment to the programme to allow additional time for funding and stakeholder engagement; and**
 - iii) **Note that no funding commitment is sought at this stage, but that future proposals may be brought for Members consideration if external funding routes cannot be secured.**

7 BIODIVERSITY ANNUAL UPDATE

- 7.1 Elgan Roberts, Head of Finance and Procurement, delivered the biodiversity annual update to Members and outlined progress towards achieving the Authority's goals set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan (2025-2028) (the Plan).

7.2 Members noted that the Biodiversity Action Plan, approved in October 2025, continued to progress well. Five actions had been completed, with work underway on the further five actions. Members recorded they're thanks to the Environment and Climate Change Manager and the wider team for their work in delivering the Plan.

7.3 **RESOLVED to:**

i) **Note the progress made towards the Authority's biodiversity goals.**

8 ESTATES STRATEGY

8.1 Elgan Roberts presented the Estates Strategy 2026-36 to Members for their awareness.

8.2 Members noted that the Estates Strategy set out a ten-year framework for the modernise and investment of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's (the Service) estate, ensuring facilities remain safe, inclusive, operationally effective and environmentally sustainable.

8.3 Members noted that the long-standing Facilities Service Level Agreement with North Wales Police would conclude by mutual agreement in March 2027, marking the end of a successful partnership that had delivered significant benefits to both organisations. Elgan Roberts took the opportunity to thank colleagues at North Wales Police for their professionalism, commitment and support throughout the partnership.

8.4 Members noted the importance of the progression of the Hwb Awen Training Centre project, which remained the Service's preferred long-term solution for meeting its training and infrastructure requirements.

8.5 The Chair noted that a third of the Service's estate required repair or replacement works and sought assurance on the significance of this figure, including how it compared with other Fire and Rescue Services.

8.6 Elgan Roberts provided Members with assurance that the identified works were not considered urgent or critical from a health and safety perspective but were required to ensure the estate remained fit for purpose and in good condition for the future.

8.7 CFO Docx advised Members that the condition of ageing estates was a challenge faced by Fire and Rescue Authorities across the UK.

8.8 Members noted that, unlike many public sector organisations, Fire and Rescue Authorities did not receive a dedicated capital allocation, meaning that estate improvements and maintenance had historically been funded through revenue budgets.

8.9 **RESOLVED to:**

i) **Endorse the Estates Strategy for 2026-2036.**

9 ANNUAL WELSH LANGUAGE MONITORING REPORT 2025/26

9.1 Natalie Jones, Welsh Language Officer, delivered the Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report for 2025/26 which outlined North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's (the Service) compliance with Welsh Language Standards 155, 161, and 167.

9.2 Members noted that no formal complaints were received during the reporting period, which was a very positive outcome and reflected the Service's continued commitment to providing Welsh language services.

9.3 Members noted an increase in demand for Welsh language services and recognised the importance of continuing to develop and provide bilingual services to meet the needs of communities across North Wales.

9.4 Members noted that 90.9% of staff possessed Welsh language skills at Level 1 or above, reflecting the Service's continued commitment to developing Welsh language capacity across the organisation.

9.5 The Chair welcomed the report, noting the positive progress made across a number of areas, and recorded their appreciation of the continued improvements and achievements reflected within the report.

9.6 A Member commended Officers for their positive attitude and commitment to the Welsh language, recognising the important contribution this makes to promoting and supporting bilingual service delivery across the organisation.

9.7 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **Approve the Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report for 2025/26 for publication on the Authority's website; and**
- ii) **Note the Service's intention to publicise the document as noted in Standards 155,161,167. Publication will be on the Service website and corporate social media accounts (namely Facebook and Instagram).**

10 ANNUAL EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PROGRESS REPORT 2025/26

- 10.1 CFO Docx presented the Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Performance Assessment Report 2025/26 and sought approval for its publication in line with statutory and organisational commitments.
- 10.2 The report provided an overview of progress against the Service's five-year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and demonstrated how the Service has continued to embed inclusivity into its organisational culture, improve workforce diversity, and deliver inclusive services to communities.
- 10.3 The report also highlighted partnership work and actions taken in response to the Independent Culture Review, reinforcing the commitment to creating a workplace where everyone can thrive.
- 10.4 CFO Docx highlighted a correction to paragraph 10 of the cover report, confirming that the mean gender pay gap had reduced from 8.29% to 7.23%.
- 10.5 The Chair welcomed the report, noting the wide range of positive initiatives and good practice taking place across the Service.
- 10.6 Members noted that the report had previously been considered by the Executive Panel at its meeting on 15 June 2026.
- 10.7 **RESOLVED to:**
 - i) **Approve the publication of the Annual EDI Report 2025/26 on the Service's website.**

11 PENSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1 ACFO MacArthur summarised the content of Firefighter's Pension Scheme paper which considered the current operating model for firefighter pensions across Wales and highlighted opportunities for collaboration to improve the effectiveness and resilience of the arrangements.
- 11.2 Members noted that the report had been endorsed by the Local Pension, who noted the principle of improvement whilst retaining local accountability and engagement.
- 11.3 ACFO MacArthur provided assurance that steps had already been taken to strengthen the Service's resilience and support the effective management of pension-related responsibilities.
- 11.4 Members noted that the Local Pension Board had endorsed a collaborative tri-Service approach across Wales. The proposed arrangement aimed to improve effectiveness, strengthen

organisational resilience and deliver greater consistency for pension scheme members across the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

11.5 RESOLVED to:

- i) Approve the Local Pension Board endorsement of the proposal to establish a tri-service workstream for collaboration across Wales to consider opportunities to improve effectiveness and resilience of pension functions.**

12 THE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP DUTY – ANNUAL REPORT

12.1 ACFO Jones presented the Social Partnership Duty Annual Report for 2025/26 and sought approval for the submission of the same to the Social Partnership Council for scrutiny and to publish the report on the Fire and Rescue Authority's website.

12.2 Members noted that the Chair and Chief Fire Officer had been attending Social Partnership Forum meetings on a regular basis, which had previously been chaired by the former Cabinet Secretary. Members were advised that the Service is awaiting confirmation from the Welsh Government's new administration on whether these meetings will continue in the future.

12.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) Approve the Annual Social Partnership Duty Report for submission to the Social Partnership Council for scrutiny and publication on the Authority's website.**

13 PERFORMANCE MONITORING, APRIL 2025 TO MARCH 2026

13.1 ACFO Jones delivered the Performance Monitoring Report for April 2025 to March 2026 and noted that the performance measures reflected the five key principles outlined in the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan (CRMIP) for the 2025/26 financial-year and included commentary on emerging trends and future actions. Key data within the report was highlighted.

13.2 The Chair welcomed the report, highlighting a number of positive outcomes, particularly the improvement in the success rate of targeted Safe and Well Checks for those identified as being at high risk.

13.3 RESOLVED to:

- i) Note the content of the Performance Monitoring Report.**

14 HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION AND ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

- 14.1 ACFO MacArthur summarised the content of the Head of Internal Audit Opinion and Annual Report 2025/26 and advised that the Authority is required annually to conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of Internal Control. Internal Audit was an integral part of that system and a significant contributor to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
- 14.2 Members noted that the report had already been considered by the Audit Committee at the meeting held on 15 June 2026.
- 14.3 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) **Endorse the content of the Head of Audit and Procurement's Annual Report and the overall 'opinion' upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's framework of governance, risk management and control.**

15 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2025/26

- 15.1 ACFO Jones summarised the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and confirmed that this had been produced in line with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.
- 15.2 Members noted that the report had already been considered by the Audit Committee at the meeting held on 15 June 2026.
- 15.3 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) **Note the final Annual Governance Statement, and:**
 - ii) **Agree the proposed actions for 2026/27**

16 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2025/26

- 16.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the Annual Statement of Accounts 2025/26 as well the findings of the Auditor General for Wales which confirmed an unqualified audit opinion, subject to completion of the outstanding audit work.
- 16.2 Members noted that the draft Statement of Accounts had been presented to the Audit Committee for scrutiny and was subsequently endorsed by the Executive Panel at its meeting on 15 June 2026.
- 16.3 Members noted that, while the accounts process had not yet been completed, good progress continued to be made. The financial position remained stable and consistent with that presented in the report considered at today's meeting.

16.4 Members noted that approval of the final Statement of Accounts had been delegated to the Audit Committee.

16.5 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **Note the audited outturn position and performance as detailed within the 2025/26 Statement of Accounts (Appendix 1);**
- ii) **Note the report of the Auditor General for Wales which confirms an unqualified audit opinion (Appendix 2); and**
- iii) **Confirm the recommendation of approval of the final audited 2025/26 Statement of Accounts, subject to no material changes.**
- iv) **If material changes are required approve delegation to Audit Committee and exec panel in September.**

17 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2025/26

17.1 Elgan Roberts delivered the Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025/26, the purpose of which was to provide Members of the Authority with an update on the treasury management activity and compliance with the treasury management prudential indicators for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.

17.2 Members noted that the report had been considered and scrutinised by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 15 June 2026.

17.3 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **Approve the treasury management activities and prudential indicators for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.**

18 STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26

18.1 Matt Powell, Deputy Clerk and Monitoring Officer, presented to Members the Standards Committee Annual Report for 2025/26. This report included a summary of the Standards Committee work during the financial year 2025/26.

18.2 Members noted that the annual report for 2025/26 would not be considered by the Executive Panel or Audit Committee.

18.3 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **Receive and note the Annual Report for 2025/26; and**
- ii) **Request that the Clerk or Deputy Clerk provide a copy of the Annual Report to the PSOW.**

19 PROPOSED UPDATES TO THE MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT AND LOCAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

19.1 Matt Powell summarised the proposed updates to the Members Code of Conduct and Local Resolution Procedure (LRP) and sought approval to make updates to the Constitution to reflect these changes.

19.2 RESOLVED to:

- i) Approve the changes to the LRP and the Code of Conduct as identified in Appendices 1 and 2; and**
- ii) Request that the Clerk or Deputy Clerk arrange to amend the constitution to give effect to these changes.**

20 URGENT MATTERS

20.1 As announced at the start of the meeting, the Draft Supplementary Remuneration Report was brought to the attention of the Authority as an urgent matter. The content of this report was summarised verbally by Gareth Owens, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, and suggesting a daily rate for councillors based on WG model for assessing.

20.2 Members noted that the proposed governance model would differ from the current arrangements. It was further noted that the Democracy and Boundary Commission was proposing a revised remuneration structure, comprising of a daily rate for both councillor and appointed members.

20.3 The Clerk/Monitoring Officer advised Members that the proposed arrangements were likely to require a greater level of administration and supporting documentation. Members noted that the Fire and Rescue Authority may need to develop local conventions and processes to determine remuneration for attendance at meetings and the undertaking of various roles and functions.

20.4 The Clerk/Monitoring Officer informed Members that there was a deadline for responding to the consultation. Following discussions with the CFO and Section 151 Officer, it was considered appropriate for the Authority to submit a response.

20.5 Members noted that delegated authority would be sought for the Chief Fire Officer, Section 151 Officer and Clerk/Monitoring Officer to prepare and submit the response on behalf of the Authority. The response would subsequently be circulated to all Members.

20.6 The Chair emphasised that all Members should have the opportunity to review the report and provide feedback before any formal response was submitted on behalf of the Authority.

20.7 RESOLVED to:

- i) Approve delegation that the Chief Fire Officer, Section 151 Officer, Clerk/Monitoring Officer and the Chair of the Fire Authority prepare the response to the DBCC in relation to future remuneration.**

Meeting concluded 11:47hrs

Members and Officers were thanked for their participation.