

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER 2024 AT 1200 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 08 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Vij Randeniya, Chair
Kirsty Williams
Baroness Wilcox of Newport
Carl Foulkes

OFFICERS PRESENT: CFO Stuart Millington, ACO Alison Reed – Director of People Services, T/ACFO Dean Loader – Director of Service Delivery, Lisa Mullan – Head of Finance, Procurement and Property, Gabrielle Greathead – Interim Monitoring Officer, T/AM Mike Wyatt – Risk Reduction, Wayne Thomas – T/Head of Corporate Support, Lisa Shroll – Head of People Services, Christian Landeg-John – Advisor to Commissioners, Laura Grogan – Media and Communications Lead

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that there will be a pay agreement for staff covered by Green Book conditions from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 which will be paid in November.

3. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF

a. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2024

The Commissioners agreed the minutes from Thursday 26 September 2024 as a true record of discussions and no matters arising.

b. LOCAL PENSION BOARD COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2024

The Commissioners agreed the minutes from Wednesday 3 July 2024 as a true record of discussions and no matters arising.

4. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

There were no updates on the outstanding actions.

5. REPORTS FOR DECISION

5.1 ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024/2025

Wayne Thomas, Temporary Head of Corporate Support presented the Annual Improvement Plan. The plan reports on achievements and performance against objectives set for 2023/2024 and key priorities for 2025/2026 against the long-term Strategic Themes within the Service's ten-year Strategic Plan.

Wayne Thomas explained that the document is a similar style to the previous but has a fresh design to incorporate the direction the Service is taking. The report includes our KPI's and a look at our continuous improvement. The plan is sectioned in two halves, with one being a look back at the year and one a look forward to the next year. The Welsh version is currently being drafted based on the content of the English report. Vij Randeniya thanked the team on behalf of the Commissioners for their hard work and effort put into this plan and stated that a quick read was a good decision. This format will be put out to the public and there will be a communication plan around the publication. Lady Wilcox reiterated her thanks for the team's engagement and stressed the importance of a quick or easy read and would like all our plans to have this morning forward. Lady Wilcox queried whether the Service has thought of any areas that may be a concern or problematic when the plan is published. A 12 week communication plan has been created but any areas of concern will be flagged and addressed at the time.

Kirsty Williams made a distinction between an easy read and a quick read as the language will be different. We will need to be clear on what approach we take and producing an easy ready would be something for us to consider next year. Carl Foulkes noted that this is a strong piece of work and is pleased to see a quick read. Vij Randeniya noted that there has been multiple iterations that has been brought to the Commissioners for comments and a lot of thought has been given to this to reach the final version.

RESOLVED THAT

- 5.1.1 The Commissioners approve the final version of the Annual Improvement Plan for publication on 31 October 2024.

5.2 CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION

Gabrielle Greathead, Interim Monitoring Officer presented her report on the changes to the Constitution. Section 37 of the Local Government Act requires the Service to keep up to date and publish its Constitution. It was noted that while minor amendments can be undertaken outside of the Board of Commissioners, major changes must be formally approved at the Board of Commissioners. The Constitution has been updated to reflect the changes of the governance arrangement and delegations of powers following the intervention of Welsh Government.

There has been an effort to make the Constitution an easy read document as it is a comprehensive and difficult document to read. We are working on finalising a quick read document and will consider an easier read to go with it. When Welsh Government issue further actions on the future governance arrangement and review the Commissioners intervention, the Constitution will need to be amended. There will potentially be minor amendments as we look forward to our values and our recommitment to the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.

Vij Randeniya reiterated point 2.5 of the report that this an interim measure and will be revisited when the intervention ends. Carl Foulkes is not concerned about doing a quick read or an easy read at this point as it will be amended but is a good point for the future. Kirsty Williams agreed and noted this is a low priority for now but to consider accessible versions once there is some stability.

RESOLVED THAT

5.2.1 The Commissioners note and approve the amended South Wales Fire and Rescue Constitution.

6. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

6.1 AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM (AFA) RESPONSE CHANGE UPDATE

Mike Wyatt, Temporary Head of Risk Reduction advised we are on track for the launch date in January. On 16 October there was a meeting held with the alarm receiving companies. There were concerns around specialised housing such as sheltered accommodation, independent living buildings and extra care homes that there will be no attendance during the daytime. The team will write a briefing note on this. An online meeting was held on 23 October with Torfaen Health and Safety representatives and they had concerns around the change response and how it will affect their insurance. We have directed them to guidance that is on our website. The next steps is to finalise the radio campaign which Mike Wyatt will approve to go out in November. There is a meeting on 20 November at Companies House with the strategic fire members of all four Health Boards and shared services in All Wales. Kirsty Williams queried the

concern around sheltered accommodation and extra care homes and what is the difference between attending care homes. CFO Millington confirmed that it is a legislative requirement to attend care homes but this has been a learning from us and something to be considered. Kirsty Williams noted that extra care is a relatively new concept in social care and that the legislation likely has not been updated but is reassured that this is on the radar and being looked at. There has been some concerns raised from Torfaen education facilities that there will be no attendance during the day, the evening and during the school holiday. Lady Wilcox explained it will be likely that all Unitary Authorities will have these concerns and it will be for us as a Service to provide reassurance and understanding around the process. CFO Millington stated that any concerns around the impact of insurance should be delegated to the person responsible to put suitable planning and insurance in place.

RESOLVED THAT

6.1.1 The Commissioners note the update from the Automatic Fire Alarm Response Change.

7. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE 2024/2025

It was noted that December has many reports scheduled to be brought to the committee and that we should consider prioritising all statutory reports and postponing other reports until the February Board of Commissioners. February's committee will see an update on the HMICFRS and the Automatic Fire Alarm. It was requested that the Forward Work Programme is amended to reflect these will be an update post launch in February and March.

8. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRPERSON DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OR 2)

The Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service expressed their thanks to CFO Millington for his time in South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.