

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN  
CYMRU**



**MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING**

**CYFARFOD O'R PWYLLGOR RHEOLI ADNODDAU  
MEETING OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**DYDD LLUN, 16 NOVEMBER 2015**

**MONDAY, 16 TACHWEDD 2015**

**PENCADLYS Y GWASANAETH TÂN AC ACHUB  
HEOL LLWYN PISGWYDD, CAERFYRDDIN  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS,  
LIME GROVE AVENUE, CARMARTHEN**

**11.00 – 13.20**

**93% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

**Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:**

**CADEIRYDD/CHAIRPERSON: E Williams  
IS-GADEIRYDD/ DEPUTY S Paddison**

**AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: J Bayliss, J Curtice,  
L Frayling, J Hale,  
C Evans, R Lewis, P Pritchard,  
G Thomas, J Warman (departed meeting  
at 12.30), R Llewellyn, K Pearson, R  
Rees-Evans**

**YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: W Evans**

**YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: C Davies, M Crennell, E Aitken, R Quin,  
K Jones, R Thomas, D Daycock**

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors W Evans.

## **2 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS**

All Members present declared that they had a personal interest in any business relating to, or affecting their own Constituent Authority.

Cllr S Paddison, Deputy Chair of Resource Management Committee declared a prejudicial interest in item 10 namely to receive a report on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2016/17.

Cllr J A Hale declared a personal interest by way of membership of the UNISON Trade Union, for which a dispensation to speak had been granted by the Standards Committee.

## **3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS**

The Chair informed the Committee that Members had received a warm welcome at the National Fire Conference that he had attended in September 2015. The Chair stated that he felt it was a welcome that would not be forgotten and was very well received.

A warm welcome was extended to Councillor Evans of Carmarthen Council, who had replaced Councillor Calum Higgins on the Fire Authority. Warm wishes were also extended to Councillor Llewellyn following a period of illness; to which all Members expressed their pleasure at Councillor Llewellyn's return to the Resource Management Committee.

## **4 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 JULY 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2015 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

A request was received from Councillor Pritchard to confirm his attendance at the previous meeting in order to update his personal records.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement referred Members to paragraph four on page two of the minutes, following a request received from Councillor Paddison regarding further information around specific incidents and accidents. Members had been provided with a report on the evaluation of Light Vehicle CCTV, which advised that the Service was in the process of trialling light vehicle CCTV. Evidence had been provided from front line appliances and it was reported that the quality of accident information had been very good. Councillor Paddison thanked the Director of Operational Support and Improvement for this information. Councillor Pritchard enquired if the camera would capture forward and

backward movement on the vehicles, and the Director replied that the Service would be considering all options concerning light vehicle CCTV during the trial period.

In relation to page 2 paragraph 4 of the minutes, the Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement informed Members that copies of Warm up and Cool Down Exercises together with a copy of the Station Drill Risk assessment and pre warm up/cool down code of practice Policy had been provided for Members information. Members were also referred to page five, paragraph three and it was confirmed that an online sifting tool had been utilised during the recent wholetime recruitment campaign for which sampling had been completed with current personnel, prior to the sifting process of the wholetime recruitment campaign taking place.

Councillor Paddison thanked all Officers for the updates provided to Members.

## **5 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/16.**

The Director of Resources presented Committee with the Budget Monitoring Report for the financial year 2015/16, and it was reported to Members that there had been an underspend of £60,000 recorded up to the end of September which was projected to be £160,000 by the end of March. It was noted that this was a relatively low figure and that the importance of budget monitoring was far greater now due to the budget reductions and accordingly would be monitored closely in future. Members were informed that it would be increasingly difficult to expect to achieve an underspend whilst continuing to replenish reserves.

Members were informed that the Community Safety, Airwave and National Resilience grants were on track and further confirmation from Welsh Government was being sought. It was also confirmed that all maintenance works to prevent slips, trips, falls and similar hazards would be undertaken as and when required, and it was further reported that all station upgrades and larger projects would incur a temporary delay whilst the Service Review programme was being undertaken.

The Director of Resources referred Committee to Appendix 1 and stated that the projections which were shown on the right hand side, showed an underspend on vacancies, as there were 32 recorded vacancies within the Service. It was reported that substantive vacancies had been filled by temporary wholetime contracts. An overspend was reported to Members in relation to Retained Firefighters following a recent legal court case concerning the Modified Pension Scheme, the outcome of which was to enable Retained Personnel to receive similar Pension benefits to that of Wholetime Personnel for the qualifying period of 2000-2006. Committee was informed that an under spend of £116,000 (0.26% of the approved budget) had been recorded on other costs that were contained within the report.

An increase in cost had been noted for Premises, due to the accrual of non-domestic rates at Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Llandrindod Wells and Llanelli Fire Stations. A reduction in cost had been recorded with Fire Service Transport, which was reported to be due to the reduction in fuel costs. Members were reassured that all recorded overspends and underspends would be remedied where possible. Committee

Members also received an update on Fire Station upgrade work and it was reported that the Aberystwyth Community Fire Station project was on track to remain within budget. Carmarthen Workshops and Builth Wells works were on-going and it was confirmed that although in general upgrades had been placed on hold pending the outcome of the Fire Service review, Haverfordwest, Llanfair Caereinion and Machynlleth Fire Station works were going ahead as planned.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Rees-Evans regarding the requirements of hydrant installations, the Director of Operational Support and Improvement confirmed that the installations of hydrants was based upon the profile of local areas, their population and risk profile. The Director of Service Delivery informed Members that should there be a requirement for hydrants to be installed on development projects, there was a duty on the Fire and Rescue Service to pay for the installation of such hydrants, as provided for in the 2004 Fire and Rescue Services Act. The Director of Resources advised Members that further information regarding this matter would be provided to Committee as requested.

Councillor Pearson enquired whether the vacant permanent posts within the Service would be filled and if they weren't what would happen with the funds? The Director of Resources confirmed that the Service was not looking to recruit non uniformed employees permanently whilst the Service Review was being undertaken, and that should vacant posts not be filled in the future, any allocated budget and under spend would be brought forward in the budget reduction. Members were informed that the Service was currently utilising agency employees on a short term basis to fill permanent vacancies temporarily. Councillor Pearson further questioned if the Service was able to employ staff on a temporary basis. The Chief Fire Officer reported to the Committee that there was 32 wholtime vacancies, which the Service were looking to fill, some following the wholtime recruitment campaign, it was also confirmed that non-uniformed vacancies had been filled on a temporary basis pending the Service review, and any potential budget cuts the Service was likely to receive.

The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement supported the comments made by the Chief Fire Officer and Director of Resources, and stated to Committee Members that the Service filled vacancies where possible, and that an All Wales Agency Staff procurement exercise had taken place which was now being utilised for the employment of temporary agency personnel. The Director of Resources informed Committee Members that employees on temporary contracts essentially accrue the same employment rights after a period of time as that of permanent employees and therefore sometimes agency staff were more appropriate, although more costly. In some instances where the Service was sure of a requirement, it had purchased employees from the agencies.

Councillor Paddison requested that all Fire Stations within the Service area receive maintenance works when required to avoid experiencing the build-up of large future costs, which may be incurred should the works not be completed when needed. The Director of Resources confirmed that all minor works and maintenance works would be carried out at Fire Stations across the Service area when required, and reported to Members that it was only Fire Station upgrades that had been placed on hold pending the outcome of the Service review.

An error in the agenda regarding the date was noted by Councillor Thomas, and it was agreed that this would be corrected.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee note the information contained within the Report.***

### **6 JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES ON THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/17.**

The Clerk reported to Committee that an amended report had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting taking place due to a mix up at printing stage, and apologised for any inconvenience caused.

The Chief Fire Officer presented Committee with the report on the budget requirement for the financial year 2016/17 and confirmed that Members would be familiar with the information contained within the report as it had been presented at the Fire Authority Meeting which had taken place in September. Members were reminded of the three corporate planning days which had been the basis of initial discussions in determining the budget. It was reported to Members that the Fire Service would continue to make savings where possible; however, any further cuts would begin to affect Service Delivery. It was confirmed at the previous Fire Authority meeting on 21 September 2015 that Members had provided an indication of budget reductions, which had resulted in a 0.62% budget increase on Constituent Authorities. Members were further informed of the requirement to make projected budget savings of approximately £850,000 p.a. over the next 2 years, which was 2% of the overall budget p.a., and that the financial settlement would be extremely late being announced, as the UK Spending Review was not due until 25 November 2015.

It was also reported to Members that presentations had been given to Carmarthenshire, Powys and Pembrokeshire Constituent local authorities, with the remaining authority areas to be completed in due course. It was confirmed that full support had been received from the local authorities that had received the presentations, for the proposals being made. The Chief Fire Officer reported that the presentations had highlighted efficiencies which had already been made, to which positive feedback was received. It was confirmed that all efficiencies had been made without making any reduction in Service Delivery, and that £7.7 million pounds had been saved over the last 10 year period which was 17% of budget. Station based staff had been reduced by 27% and middle manager posts reduced by 34%. The Chief Fire Officer reiterated to Members that further cuts would have a disproportionate impact on the service to local communities. The Chief Fire Officer stated to the Committee that approximately 1300 responses had been received from the public opinion survey distributed by the Fire Service, of which 82% of individuals, who had responded to the questionnaire, confirmed that they would prefer to pay more for the

services provided by the Fire Service rather than see any additional budget cuts being made. It was reported that to enable the whole range of services to be provided to local communities, would only cost the members of the community £49.00 per person per year, which equated to approximately £4.00 per month.

The Director of Resources updated Committee on additional financial burdens the Fire Authority would be facing that the Constituent Authorities would not, which included changes in pension schemes, and the capital programme, and it was confirmed that the addition of any new capital scheme would see an increase of revenue budget pressure to the Fire Authority in terms of capital charges. It was conveyed to Members that the reduction in inflation had been reflected in the budget and that the Fire Authority had previously over the years achieved the reductions or increases experienced by the constituent authorities, but this had been more difficult to achieve in the most recent years. The Director of Resources further reported to Members that in order to achieve a 4% reduction, a figure of near £4 million pounds would need to be saved, and this would certainly mean downgrading of Fire Stations in some regard. Efficiencies of £1.54 million had been proposed which would have no effect on levels of service delivery or on Fire Stations. Any further reductions would mean difficult choices for service delivery.

Committee were updated on the Fire Authority reserves and it was confirmed that there was a figure of £8.5 million pounds in reserves at the end of 2014/2015. It was also reported to Members that the large amount of reserves had been established to potentially enable a reduction in the revenue budget at some future stage. £1.2m worth of capital funding would be financed from reserves, and £2m had been set aside for invest to save schemes, mainly for the Joint Control Project. The Director of Resources confirmed that £350,000 of insurance commitment costs were being brought into the revenue budget, which would be supported by £250,000 from reserves in the first year and £150,000 in the second year and nothing in the third year in order to phase in the commitment. The Director of Resources gave her view as regards the sufficiency of reserves and concluded that these were at the right level for the budget proposed.

It was reported to Members that at present the Service was unaware of the level of grants likely to be received due to the late settlement, it was confirmed that there was a level of assumption within the budget that grants would still be provided by Welsh Government. Members were informed that a letter had been received from the Minister to advise that the Welsh Government were unable to confirm what grants, if any would be awarded to the Fire Service.

The Director of Resources referred Committee Members to the validation of the 2015/16 budget and confirmed that as population shares changed the budget allocation to Constituent Authorities also changed. It was reported to Members that should a decision be made to consider making reductions beyond £1.54m savings, radical changes to crewing on stations would need to be implemented and an introduction of a compulsory redundancy policy would need to be considered, as staff costs made up the greatest element of the budget. It was reported to Members that a further verbal update on settlements would be provided to Members at the Fire Authority meeting in December.

Committee Members were referred to the Appendices for the report and the Director of Resources updated Members on their contents. It was recommended in Appendix A that a budget level of £44,292,049, (£250,000 of which would be financed from reserves), would leave £44,042,049 falling on the constituent authorities, which would result in a 0.62% increase in budget. It was also recommended that Members approve the proposed capital programme, reported in Appendix B and that Members approve the level of efficiencies in Appendix C, and the approval of the vehicle replacement programme set out in Appendix D.

Councillor C Evans thanked the Chief Fire Officer for the presentation delivered to Carmarthenshire County Council and reported that he felt that it had been an excellent presentation which Members had thoroughly enjoyed. Councillor Evans commented on the spending review, Autumn statement from Central Government and reported a planned reduction to the Local Constituent Authority of 4% was extremely optimistic and raised his concerns that non-statutory services would be hugely affected together with the services of the Fire Service if these budget cuts were to be implemented.

In response to Councillor Evans' concerns, the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the figure of 4% was only an indication of the budget, as discussions were taking place and that the Fire Authority was governed by the Combination Order Scheme that allowed the Fire Service to determine the extent of budget that is purposeful for the delivery of the Fire and Rescue Service within its area, irrespective of the Local Authority budget. The Chief Fire Officer stated that the Fire Authority would assist in responding positively to budget pressures where possible without compromising Public Safety. The Director of Resources responded to Cllr Evans specific reference, and confirmed that the percentage reductions quoted were aimed at Government Departments and not the spend in Constituent Authorities, which would not have a direct impact on Fire Authorities. The reduction for Constituent Authorities may also be less on average due to the possible outcome of the Assembly elections. .

Councillor Pearson discussed the Barnett formula and requested that all Members write to their AM's and MP's in order to gain equality and equal treatment for the Fire Service area? Councillor Warman stated that public safety should not be compromised at all, and that Fire Authority efficiencies had been made where possible and that caution should be applied when utilising reserves to support the budget.

In response to a query received from Councillor Rees-Evans, the Director of Resources confirmed that the allocation of debt to the revenue accounts as well as the structure of the levels of debt was currently based on best practice. It was however possible to re-examine the periods over which assets were financed. Councillor Rees-Evans stated that if debt was to be paid off quicker, the Authority would pay less as a result of incurring less interest. Councillor Rees-Evans reported that a similar exercise had been undertaken by Ceredigion County Council which had resulted in a potential saving of £1.5 million. The Director responded that the potential for re-scheduling would be examined but the figures for Fire Authority debt were a lot smaller as debt has only been accruing since 1996, so initial expectations of

rescheduling were not optimistic.

A discussion ensued regarding the Barnett formula and Members reported that they did not wish for Service Delivery and public safety to be compromised.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee approve the report for recommendation to the Fire and Rescue Authority.***

### **7 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE FINANCIAL RESERVES STRATEGY REPORT.**

The Clerk informed Committee Members of amendments to the report and confirmed that the recommendation contained within the report should mirror that on the front page and that the report should have stated that the Committee were to make a decision to recommend to the Fire Authority Meeting, which was due to take place in December. It was also specified that page 3, paragraph 4.1 should have made reference to Appendix 1, of the enclosed document.

The Director of Resources introduced the report and confirmed that a Financial Reserves Strategy had been introduced following a recommendation received from a Financial Resilience audit. It was confirmed to Members that Strategy was to record the reporting of reserves and the adequacy of reserves for Service needs, and it was reported that it was the responsibility of the treasurer to recommend to the Fire Authority what reserves should be created.

Members were informed that the Strategy document included types of reserves and examples of useable reserves. It was established by the Director of Resources that examples of the useable reserves being proposed in the draft document were capital development funds, purchases, insurance funds, reserves for business units, reserves for unspent revenue grants and donations. It was also reported that the Fire Authority would hold a capital receipts reserve. Members were informed of unusable reserves that had arisen as a result of legislation and proper accounting practice, and advised Members that unusable reserves were unable to be used for any other purpose than those specified within the document. The risk of assessing the adequacy of reserves was stated to Members as contained within the draft report. The Director of Resources commended for Members to approve the draft report for recommendation to the Fire Authority.

In response to a query raised from Councillor Rees-Evans regarding the level of reserves, the Director of Resources confirmed that the level of reserves is a matter for local determination. Providing the setting aside can be justified as being relevant and required, it would be unlikely that the auditor would raise objections.

## RESOLUTION

***It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee approve the Financial Reserves Strategy for recommendation to the full Fire Authority.***

### **8 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT**

The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement presented a report on various Human Resources work-streams for the period of July to October 2015. Members were provided with an update on the procured HR/Payroll system, it was confirmed that phase one had been completed, and the rostering and time attendance phase would be commencing shortly, together with the performance management data. Members were informed of the purchasing of the recruitment sifting tool which had been cost effective and had been procured from a company named AD&C.

It was confirmed that an All Wales agency staff agreement had been put in place which included a total of three companies. The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement provided Members with an update on the Part Time Workers claim following an employment tribunal decision. Members were informed that the Strategic Equality plan was out for consultation and was being undertaken as part of a wider consultative process inviting key parties such as County Councils, NHS and Third Sector Partners.

The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement provided Members with an update on managing employee figures, and confirmed that there were 32 vacancies within the operational sector which were being filled by temporary wholtime contacts following an agreement with the Trade unions. Members were informed that 5,600 applications had been received for the recent all Wales recruitment campaign of which 938 had been received for Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service. 290 of the applicants had been progressed to the next stage of the recruitment process of which 112 were On-Call personnel. 164 members of the public were successful in getting to the dealing with information assessment and 111 progressed to physical assessments and 75 members of the public would be interviewed, which were commencing shortly. Members were informed that 12 On-Call personnel would be on a Conversion Course prior to the Christmas period and a further 12 individuals commencing a 14 week Training Course in January to be operationally on the run by Spring 2016.

Members were provided with an update on the On-Call recruitment, with an establishment figure of over 700 On-call staff based upon different hours of availability. The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement advised Members that there had been some difficulties with the recruitment of On-Call staff as their hours of availability had not suited the requirements of the Stations together with issues around individuals being released from their primary employment. Members were reassured that all efforts were being made to support recruitment and increase the On-Call establishment.

An update was provided on the modified Pension Scheme, where 330 eligible

personnel had been identified and written to accordingly, of which 16 expressions of interest to join the scheme had been received by the Service.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Resources Management Committee note the Human Resources Quarterly Update Report.***

### **9 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT.**

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement presented the Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management report to Members. It was reported to Members that an All Wales group had been set up and had held their first meeting in September.

Committee Members were presented with an overview of the report and were informed of the decrease in On-Duty Injuries. Members were asked to consider the graph to show On Duty injuries by Command, Departments and Visitors and it was confirmed that the green columns were for off duty injuries, which was predominantly due to sporting accidents and primary employment injuries which accounted for the large amount in Powys Command due to the number of On-Call Fire Stations.

Members were also provided with an update on the on-duty injuries by activity and it was reported that the figures contained within the report included two major injuries, where a Community Fire Safety employee had slipped on the premises threshold in Morryston Fire Station and fractured a bone in their hand, and a flycatcher had fallen off the wall in Earlswood and struck the catering assistant. It was stated to Members that this matter was being looked into in order to establish the cause of the on-duty injury. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement advised Members that injuries to hands featured highly and there had been four attacks reported on Firefighters within the Service since April, two of which were verbal abuse and one of physical abuse reported in Pembrokeshire command area and one of verbal abuse in Swansea command area.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement reported to Members that there had been a reduction in Vehicle Accidents to 60 for the period of 01 April to 30 September 2015 and that the near side of vehicles was recorded as being the highest area, as well as the recording of struck fixed objects. Members were reassured that the Service was working to reduce these figures.

In response to a query from Councillor Paddison, it was confirmed that the camera on the vehicle was just for recording purposes and did not allow for the driver to view blind spots whilst manoeuvring the vehicle. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement stated that this technology was not yet available but the Service would be monitoring all future technology developments.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that the Committee note the report.*

### 10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17.

Councillor S Paddison, retired from the meeting having previously declared a prejudicial interest regarding this agenda item.

The Clerk informed Committee Members that revised copies of the report had been circulated prior to the meeting commencing and that a few further amendments were to be noted, namely that .Item 2 National/Wales Position, paragraph 2.2 being amended to 'was awaiting Royal Assent' and item 4 proposal, 4.1 was that ' the Committee were to recommend to the Fire Authority whether to pay senior salaries to the Chairs of Committees and Deputy Chair'.

The Clerk presented a report to Members on the draft annual report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales 2016/17 and confirmed that the report summarised the findings contained within the draft annual report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales 2016/17, regarding Members allowances and remuneration. The Clerk informed Members that there had been no change to the salaries recommended to be paid to Members. The Clerk stated that the Fire Authority had also formerly resolved to continue with its previous determination, that the Authority would not adopt senior salaries for Committee Chairs or the Deputy Chair of the Fire Authority, and that this issue was again up for consideration by Committee Members, as a recommendation to the Fire Authority.

Members were also invited to respond with any feedback directly to the IRPW in order to meet the consultation deadline of 30.11.2015. Committee were requested to consider the content of the report and provide any feedback during the next Fire Authority Meeting, which was due to take place in December.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that the Committee;*

- 1) Note the IRPW's draft determinations in relation to members' allowances and remuneration, for implementation in the 2016/17 municipal year.**
- 2) Invite Committee Members (and all Members of the Fire Authority) to send their individual comments directly to the IRPW by 30.11.2015.**
- 3) Recommend to the Fire Authority that it continues not to pay a senior salary allowance to the Deputy Chair of the Fire Authority, nor the chairs of the**

## **Resource management committee or the Performance audit and Scrutiny committee.**

*Councillor S Paddison returned to the meeting.*

### **11 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING.**

The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement presented a quarterly report on Health and Wellbeing to Members. The Service's sickness absence statistics for the period of 01 April 2014 – 31 March 2015 was 8.47 shifts lost and this represented an improvement of 1 shift per employee from the 2013-14 performance which was 9.59 shifts lost. The overall sickness absence figure for the period 01 April 2015 – 30 September 2015 was 3.58 shifts lost. It was reported to Committee Members that the Service had undertaken 640 fitness assessments with 380 remaining, which would be completed over the next four month period, and a success pass rate of 90% had been recorded. The required VO2 max level which is the maximum rate of oxygen consumption as measured during incremental exercise, which was set at a level of 42 and was being met by a number of personnel. A default rate of 35 VO2 max had been reached by 10% of employees and improvement plans had been provided accordingly, together with those who had failed the tests completely. Members were informed that progress had been made with managing sickness and absence, and figures had been reduced from previous years, showing significant progress towards reaching the overall Service target of 6.6%.

Members were informed that the Service had achieved the Corporate Health Gold Award and were currently working towards achieving the Platinum Award. The ill health retirements continued to remain at a low figure and sickness absence within the On-Call sector also remained low. It was reported to Members that difficulty had been experienced in getting Fire Service personnel to the assessment centres, as there was not fitness assessment equipment in all locations due to cost implications. It was stated that a mobile fitness training unit was available within the Service and travelled around different locations, particularly within the Ceredigion and Powys areas.

The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement confirmed to Members that the sickness absence figures for the three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales for 2014/15 were as follows; Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service 7.6 shifts lost, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service 8.7 shifts lost. . Committee were advised that North Wales sickness and absence data was not available at the time of collating the report.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Pritchard regarding the 60 individuals who had failed to meet the required fitness standards, it was confirmed to that all Service personnel who had failed to meet the necessary requirements would be afforded an opportunity to improve, with the aid of an individually tailored improvement plan and they would then be re-tested within a three month period. Councillor Hale enquired who the Service's Occupational Health provider was to which the Corporate Head of

Operational Support and Improvement stated it was a company called Insync Healthcare Ltd, and their services had been procured for the last three and half years, following a contract extension. It was also confirmed that the Occupational Health budget with Insync Healthcare Ltd remained fairly consistent and was within budget parameters.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Committee note the report.***

### **12 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION REGARDING AN OVERVIEW OF SERVICE ROLE.**

The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement presented an overview of Service roles to Members, which provided Members with an outline on the structure and roles of Grey book Operational employees as well as Green book Non-Uniformed employees.

### **13. Any other items of business that by reason of special circumstance, the Chair decides should be considered as a matter of urgency, pursuant to Section 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.**

The Chair congratulated Mrs Owens on the birth of her baby daughter, Ila Mae on 30 October 2015 weighing 7lbs 5oz.

The meeting closed at 1320.