

**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, 19 IONAWR 2015**

**MONDAY, 19 JANUARY 2015**

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

**11.00 – 13:10**

**80% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

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

**CADEIRYDD/CHAIRPERSON:** J Curtice  
**IS-GADEIRYDD/ DEPUTY** E Williams  
**CHAIRPERSON:**

**AELODAU/MEMBERS:** Cyng/Cllrs: G Thomas, W Evans,  
J Bayliss, L Frayling, C Higgins, R Lewis,  
R Llewellyn, K Pearson, S Paddison,  
R Rees-Evans

**YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:** G Tanner, P Pritchard, D Cole

**YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:** E Aitken, D Masson, K Jones, A Francis,  
S Flather, C Jackson, D Daycock

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors G Tanner, P Pritchard and D Cole.

## **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.

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

Following the announcement of the Queens New Year's Honours List the Chair wished to congratulate Mr Richard Smith, former Chief Fire Officer of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service who would be receiving a Queens Fire Service Medal (QFSM). The Chair also congratulated Mr Mel Jehu, Member of the Standards Committee who would be receiving an MBE.

## **4 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2014**

The Chair stated that there was an error within paragraph 6 on page 3 of the minutes where the date April 2014 should read April 2015.

The minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

### Matters Arising from the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014

The Director of Resources referred to Recommendation 2 outlined on page 5 of the minutes and clarified to Members that as suggested by Councillor E Williams Recommendation 2 had carried a contingency of £50k from reserves, this was not forwarded to the Fire Authority as it was a contingency and would be dealt with as an Officer's delegation should it be required.

## **5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

The Temporary Director of Development presented the report on Health and Wellbeing to Members.

Members were informed that in order to improve the fitness levels of operational employees the Service had commenced its programme of Fitness Assessments as part of the All Wales Fitness Policy. The main priority for the Service was to ensure employees were fit to perform operational tasks and it was reported that to date the pass rate was 90%.

The Temporary Director of Development reported that the Service had made significant improvements in reducing the overall absence rate and that the Service's sickness absence statistics for the period 01 April 2014 – 30 November 2014 was 5.35 shifts lost with a projected overall for the year of 8.02 shifts lost for the 2014-15 financial year. Furthermore, the statistics for the same period in 2013-14 was 6.45 shifts lost from 01 April 2013 – 30 November 2013 with a projected overall average being 9.35 shifts lost. The comparison translated to an improvement of approximately 1.5 days in terms of staff attendance.

The Temporary Director of Development provided a hand out to Members which contained the sickness absence figures for North Wales and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services for the 2013/14 financial year which also contained sickness absence data for County Councils, Police Forces and the NHS Trusts in Wales, simply for Members information.

In response to Councillor Bayliss' query regarding how the Service was currently reducing sickness absences, the Temporary Director of Development provided Members with examples of what practices had been put in place which had contributed to the reduction of sickness absences such as early referrals and reviews via the Occupational Health Service, closer management of timeframes on modified duties and the funding of surgical intervention and/or one to one counselling where this was cost effective.

Further to the Fitness Assessment Programme, Councillor Pearson queried about the 10% who were unsuccessful at passing the assessment. The Temporary Director of Development informed Members that in cases of employees not meeting the fitness standards, information on how to improve their fitness would be provided and a review would be carried out on at regular intervals to gauge improvements in fitness standards

Councillor Pearson referred to Appendix 4 of the report and queried why the figure was high for Pontardawe fire station. The Temporary Director of Development stated that, whilst he did not have any precise details to hand, he believed that the high figure was due to a long term back injury to an individual at that station.

In response to Councillor Paddison's query, the Temporary Director of Development informed Members that in cases of long term illnesses and considering the likelihood of an individual returning to work, advice would be sought from Occupational Health in terms of the most appropriate management of that case.

With regard to the slippage in sickness absences in terms of the overall upward trend in recent years, Councillor Rees-Evans queried if there were any reasons for the slippage, and if so where? The Temporary Director of Development referred to Appendix 1 and explained to Members that there had been some increases in various staff categories throughout the Service. Furthermore, Councillor Rees-Evans raised a query as to whether any increased slippage may have been caused by the effects of the budget cuts, to which the Temporary Director of Development reported that he could not confirm that there was a direct link.

Councillor R Lewis referred to Appendix 16 and wished to note that Reynoldston Fire Station had exceptionally good attendance figures.

In response to Councillor Pearson's query, the Temporary Director of Development explained the difference between normal and ill-health retirement which was reflected within Appendix 19 of the report.

Councillor Paddison emphasised the importance of reducing sickness absence across the board and that the Authority should continue ensuring that policies were adhered to an attempt to keep employees in work.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Resources Management Committee note the report on Health and Wellbeing.***

### **6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Director of Service Delivery presented the report on Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management to Members.

It was highlighted to Members that the UK Sentencing Council had recently published revised guidelines in respect of sentencing large companies convicted of Corporate Manslaughter. This was following concerns that some existing sentences were too low, especially for large organisations convicted of the most serious health and safety offence, death in the workplace.

The Director of Service Delivery reported that for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014, there were 57 reported On Duty Injuries compared with 54 in the same period in 2013/14.

The Director of Service Delivery provided Members with an overview of some of the health and safety performance for the reporting period.

The Director of Service Delivery highlighted an error within 6.1.2 of the report which should read '*For the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 there have been 9 reported attacks on Fire-fighters within the Service.*' For Members information, the Director of Service Delivery provided a brief summary on the incidents relating to Attacks on Firefighters and added that whilst reports of this nature remained low, it was imperative that the Service continued to monitor these events to ensure that all aspects of a Fire-fighters personal safety is closely monitored.

In relation to Corporate Risk Audits, the Director of Service Delivery informed Members that the Corporate Risk Department continued with its programme of Health, Safety and Welfare Management Audits and that key lessons were being captured and improved upon.

The Director of Service Delivery stated that over the next few months, the Service

would be introducing a new Electronic Vehicle Driving Licence checking system. The system would require all Service employees who drive for Service work to complete a Data Protection Mandate to enable the Service to verify their driving licence details with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Furthermore, the new system would provide the Service the assurance that all employees who drive for Service work have a valid driving licence in place enabling compliance with the Road Traffic Act 1988, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 as well as fulfilling Service motor insurance requirements.

The Director of Service Delivery stated that further details regarding the system implementation would be presented to the next Resources Management Committee scheduled in April 2015.

In response to Councillor Bayliss' query regarding driving licences, the Director of Service Delivery confirmed that the Service assisted employees in gaining the necessary driving qualifications in line with their role.

In response to Councillor Paddison's query, the Director of Service Delivery stated that all fire appliances throughout the Service were fitted with the appropriate mirrors which aided the driver to see road cyclists.

## **RESOLUTION**

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

### **7 TO RECEIVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT**

The Temporary Director of Development presented the quarterly update report on Human Resources which provided Members with information on various Human Resources work-streams during 2014/15.

The Chair informed Members that there was an error on Page 4, paragraph 2.1.3, where the date should read April 2015.

The Temporary Director of Development provided an update to Members on the joint implementation of the integrated HR/Payroll system and stated that the Service was currently collaborating with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service in this programme with an initial implementation date of 1 April 2015 for Core HR, Payroll, Time and Attendance and Manager/Employee self-service.

Members were informed that a Modified Duties Policy had been developed on an all Wales basis, which would support the Service's Health and Well-being Strategy whilst providing greater clarity for line managers when considering suitable adjustments to facilitate an earlier return to work through robust adherence to absence management.

The Temporary Director of Development highlighted that HR continued to work in

collaboration with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service regarding the Joint Control Project and was working on matters regarding the alignment of the structure, shift patterns, and the transfer of staff. Furthermore, HR was also part of the on-going consultation and communication with trade unions as part of the project with regards to Terms and Conditions and contractual matters associated with Service employees.

It was reported that a Cultural Audit Questionnaire was launched in early November 2014 and closed to responses on 22 December 2014. The results of the audit were currently being collated by an external organisation, Opinion Research Services (ORS) and were due by the end of January 2015. The outcomes of the survey would be reported to Members at the next meeting

With regard to the retirement profile, the Temporary Director of Development stated that it was now far more difficult to factor retirements into future recruitment and resourcing plans as accurately as in the past due to the removal of the compulsory retirement age for operational employees. It was reported that there were currently 15 wholetime employees who were eligible to retire by giving contractual notice to the Service. In addition, a further 69 operational employees would become eligible to retire with full pension between now and 31 March 2018. Members were informed that a wholetime recruitment drive may be necessary towards the end of the year dependent on the establishment profile(s) .

Furthermore, Members were updated on the on-call recruitment profile were it was reported that between 1 April 2014 and 1 January 2015, 42 on-call recruits were appointed throughout the Service area. There were presently 67 applicants who met station cover requirements, and were subject to the National Firefighter Selection Tests during 2015 prior to enrolment. These were split across Commands as follows:

- Carmarthenshire 18
- Ceredigion 09
- Neath Port Talbot 11
- Pembrokeshire 08
- Powys 16
- Swansea 05

The Temporary Director of Development provided Members with an update on the Retained Firefighters' Pension Settlement (Modified Scheme) and stated that a recent exercise revealed that the current number of eligible individuals within Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service was 420 and the archived was 685.

Councillor Paddison enquired if there would be a financial implication to the Firefighters' Pension Settlement. The Director of Resources stated that £500k had been set aside, however, the exact level of commitment was still unknown at this stage. Members were also informed that there was a possibility that the some of the costs may be absorbed by Welsh Government.

With regard to Equality and Diversity, Councillor J Bayliss commended the Service on

the excellent work that had been undertaken within this area with particular emphasis on improving its overall listing within Stonewall's Employer Index.

## **RESOLUTION**

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

### **8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2015/2016**

The Director of Resources informed the Committee that each year, before the start of the financial year, the Fire and Rescue Authority was required to approve its Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for that year. The report presented to Members detailed the proposed policy and strategy.

The Director of Resources stated that the Fire Authority had fully adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management and outlined to Members how this had been achieved.

Furthermore, it was highlighted to Members that the Treasury Management Strategy provided details of the expected activities of the treasury management function in the financial year 2015-2016 and that the Strategy covered the following:-

- (a) Borrowing limits and Prudential Indicators for 2015-2016 (these are being presented to the same Resource Management Committee meeting as this strategy);
- (b) Prospects for interest rates;
- (c) Borrowing strategy;
- (d) Investments strategy; and
- (e) Debt rescheduling opportunities

With regard to the prospects for interest rates the Director of Resources informed the Committee that the Authority had access to loans with low interest rates to fund the capital programme, with the mid December certainty rates for loans of five years, fifteen years and twenty five years being 2.13%, 3.05% and 3.38% respectively.

Members were informed that as part of the borrowing strategy the interest rates on long term borrowing would be continuously reviewed. If an increase in long term rates was forecast it would be prudent to borrow while rates were low, when the Certainty rates were available. Members were informed that locking in lower rates will provide long term savings. Furthermore, the Director of Resources stated that the Authority would, from time to time, borrow on a short term basis to assist with cash flow and to optimise any interest on investments, subject to a maximum of £2m.

It was brought to Members attention that the Service had worked with South Wales

Fire and Rescue Service to complete a competitive tendering process for banking services and that a new four year contract, which commenced on 1 January 2015, had been awarded to Barclays Bank. It was reported to Members that as the investment interest rates were so low, the Authority was gaining good value from giving up its right to seek investment opportunities outside Barclays in exchange for reduced charges.

Councillor Bayliss queried which other banks responded to the tendering process. The Head of Finance stated that all high street banks were invited to tender and only Barclays Bank responded.

At this point, Councillor Bayliss apologised to the Chair and stated that he had to leave the meeting in order to attend another meeting. Councillor Bayliss left the meeting.

## RESOLUTION

It was **RESOLVED that** the Resource Management Committee recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority the formal approval of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2015-16.

### 9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT

The Director of Resources presented the report on the minimum revenue provision policy statement to Members and explained that the Authority was required to set aside funds from revenue each year to meet future liabilities to repay the principal element of loans and finance leases. The amount set aside is called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and by Regulation, Members were informed by the Director of Resources that a policy on the method of calculation had to be approved by the Authority prior to the start of the year that the method would be applied to. The Director of Resources reported that the recommended calculation method showed the estimated charge to revenue if this method is adopted and that the MRP was a cash backed charge against revenue and therefore, had a direct impact on the contributions required from the Constituent Authorities.

The Committee was informed that based on the Capital Programme and the Vehicle Replacement Programme, if the proposed calculations methods were adopted, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for 2015/16 would be as follows:

MRP calculated by Regulatory Method	£ 258,503
MRP calculated by Asset Life method funded by loan	£1,518,495
MRP calculated by Asset Life method funded by finance lease	£ 746,429
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,523,427</b>

The Clerk/Monitoring Officer stated that Recommendation 2 should be amended to

insert a comma to join the first and second sentence. The Director of Resources accepted the error and agreed to amend the Recommendation to read:-

- 2) *That the “Asset Life Method with Equal Instalments” is adopted for expenditure on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, with the Minimum Revenue Provision first being charged in the year after the asset comes in to use when funded by loan, or in the same year as the first lease rental payment if funded by finance lease.*

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee recommended to the Fire and Rescue Authority that the following Minimum Revenue Provision calculation methods are adopted for the year 2015/16:***

- 1) ***That the “Regulatory Method” is adopted for expenditure incurred before or on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.***
- 2) ***That the “Asset Life Method with Equal Instalments” is adopted for expenditure on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, with the Minimum Revenue Provision first being charged in the year after the asset comes in to use when funded by loan, or in the same year as the first lease rental payment if funded by finance lease.***

## **10 TO RECEIVE THE TREASURERS REPORT ON THE PRUDENTIAL CODE AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR**

The Director of Resources presented the Treasurers Report on the Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators for the Financial Year 2015/2016 to Members and explained that within the capital programme the Authority was required to test that:

- the capital plans are affordable;
- that all external borrowing and other long term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels; and
- that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good practice.

and that in taking decisions in relation to capital expenditure and treasury management the authority was accountable, by providing a clear and transparent framework.

The Director of Resources provided Members with an outline of the sections within Appendix 1 of the report, which detailed the Prudential Indicators for the 2015/16 budget setting process.

***It was RESOLVED that the Resources Management Committee recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority that the 2014/15 Prudential Indicators be approved.***

## 11 TO RECEIVE THE PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING DELIVERY UPDATE REPORT

The Temporary Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development presented the People Development and Training Delivery Update report which, together with Appendices A and B, summarised the key areas of learning and development within the People and Organisational Development Department (P&OD).

The Temporary Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development highlighted the salient points of the report to Members. Firstly, P&OD had been particularly active in establishing a forward work programme as part of the Investors in People (IIP) Mid-term review which followed the success of the 2013 Service Silver and Directorate Gold Awards. One recommendation highlighted to Members was that the Service had recently launched a new Talent Management Process which had been designed to formalise the approach to identifying individuals who could make a difference to organisational performance either through their immediate contribution or, in the longer-term, by demonstrating the highest levels of potential.

The Temporary Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development referred to Appendix A of the report and stated that the People and Organisation Department were committed to Skills for Justice (SFJ) as the main awarding body for the recognised sector skills for the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Temporary Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development explained that SFJ develop the National Occupational Standards (NOS's) for the Fire and Rescue Service in conjunction with lead bodies such as The Chief Fire Officer's Association (CFOA) and in addition, they were the Issuing Authority for Apprenticeship frameworks in England and Wales for the sectors covered by their license. Furthermore, Members were informed that the Department had become a registered and accredited Awarding Body in its own right, and was now able to develop learning programmes that satisfy criteria for a range of NOS's.

Appendix 2 of the report provided Members with an update on the Training Delivery Department and the Temporary Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development highlighted that the Service had provided the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme training to all Incident Commanders.

Members were reminded that they had the opportunity to watch the demonstration of the Cold Cut Fire Suppression System at the Earlswood Training Centre on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014 and added that the Training Delivery Department would be working closely with the Operational Risk Management (ORM) team into the development of Cold Cut Fire suppression systems which would improve firefighter safety in the operational environment.

Councillor G Thomas commented that the report was very interesting and also demonstrates the cutting edge training which was delivered to staff.

At this point, Councillor W Evans left the meeting.

Councillor Rees-Evans queried if there was a cost implication to the introduction of the Cold-Cut Suppression System and how it would be rolled out across the Service. The Temporary Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development informed Members that prior to purchasing the system it would be trialled within the Service as part of the overall evaluation process and formed part of the organisation's Research & Development programme into the use of new firefighting technologies..

***It was RESOLVED that the Committee noted the work of the People and Organisational Development Department.***

**12 TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2014/15**

The Director of Resources presented the Budget Monitoring Report for the Financial Year 2014/15 to Members. The report showed the estimated revenue and capital net expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2015 and compared those estimated positions with the 2014/2015 working budget.

The Director of Resources referred to the revenue monitoring report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 located at Appendix 1 of the report, and stated that the estimated expenditure for the year when compared to the budget report exhibited a forecast underspend of £574K was estimated at 31 March 2015. An explanation was provided to Members on each of the areas of underspend, which was detailed within the report.

Members were informed that the grants were on track for this financial year as highlighted within Appendix 2 of the report. The Director of Resources added that there were no issues or concerns to raise in relation to the Capital Monitoring Report 2014/15 at Appendix 3 of the report.

Councillor E Williams referred to Appendix 1 and suggested that it would be beneficial to add the variances on the two lines displaying Employees – Full time and Employees On Call together as the under/overspends were interrelated. The Director of Resources agreed that for a large part this would be appropriate.

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

**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.**

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 13:10.