

**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, 18 IONAWR 2016

MONDAY, 18 JANUARY 2016

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

11.00 – 13.30

93% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

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

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: J Curtice (departed meeting at 13:00) L Frayling (departed meeting at 13:20), J Hale (departed meeting at 13:00), P Pritchard, G Thomas, R Llewellyn, K Pearson, R Rees-Evans (departed meeting at 13:20) W Evans (Arrived at 11.25, departed meeting at 13:05)

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: R Lewis, C Anderson

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors R Lewis and C Anderson.

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.

All Members present declared that they had a personal interest in all budget matters on the agenda.

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 wished all Members and Officers a Happy New Year.

Members were informed that Councillor Cyril Anderson of Swansea Council had replaced Councillor John Bayliss on the Fire Authority.

The Clerk/Monitoring Officer reported to Members that an amended sheet for page 6, agenda item 13, namely to receive the Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management report had been circulated due to a printing error.

4 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 02 NOVEMBER 2015.

The minutes of the meeting held on 02 November 2015 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

A request was received from Councillor Paddison to note that she had left the room for agenda item 10, having declared a prejudicial interest. It was also noted that there was an error set out within the bottom paragraph on page 9, as it was Councillor Paddison's request not Councillor Pearson. It was confirmed that these errors would be corrected.

Matters Arising

The Director of Resources responded to a query raised by Councillor Rees-Evans at the previous meeting regarding the installation of fire hydrants, confirming that the Service had been raising orders for the hydrants to be installed, however Welsh Water had been unable to complete the installations straight away, which had led to a delay in the invoices being received.

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. It was confirmed to Members that the overspends and underspends reported had been reflected in the budget for 2016/17 and presented in the paper at item 9 of this meeting.

Members were referred to Appendix A, where it was confirmed that an underspend was reported against the full time employee's column, which was due to the number of vacancies not being permanently filled, pending the Fire Authority budget. An overspend on On-Call employees was noted to be due to both a change in the Service's approach to recruitment in order to ensure On-Call Fire Stations maintained a high availability; and increased pension contributions as all On-Call employees were now automatically enrolled into the Firefighters Pension Scheme and the Modified Pension Scheme. The Director of Resources stated that the underspend on full time employees may increase following more retirements and the phased pension exercise of Operational employees transferring from the 1992 Firefighters Pension Scheme to the 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme.

The Director of Resources informed Members that an overspend on premises and insurance had been recorded, which would be amended in the budget for the next financial year. Councillor Curtice enquired why an overspend had been recorded on elected members, to which the Director of Resources confirmed that it was due to a refund being issued on tax payments.

The Chief Fire Officer reported that the Service did not want to recruit and fill the unoccupied vacancies without knowing the budget pressures being faced by the Authority. Members were informed that the recruits course for new wholetime firefighters had recently commenced, which was the first wholetime recruitment course undertaken in six years. It was also confirmed by the Chief Fire Officer that a decision had been made to recruit to the maximum on On-Call Fire Stations.

The Chair advised Members to add the two figures together for the Employees Full Time and Employees On-Call and providing the overall figure was under the approved budget figure this would be acceptable.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Pearson, the Director of Resources confirmed that the £700,000 allocated to Station upgrades had not been spent and was allocated for large fire station upgrades and not routine maintenance. It was reported that no large projects had been committed to pending the outcome of the service review. The Director of Resources informed Members that this amount would be carried forward to next year's budget.

Councillor Pearson questioned the additional income reported against income on Appendix 2 and enquired if this was for grants provided to the Service. The Director of Resources and Head of Finance confirmed that it was not and that it was for other income received for projects undertaken by the Service that were also grant funded.

Councillor Rees-Evans enquired regarding insurance costs. The Director of Resources confirmed that the original insurance agreement was a 5-year agreement which had been extended by a further two years. Members were informed that the Service had previously looked into self-insuring, which had not been feasible, but the Service was aiming to reduce the insurance risk significantly to enable a reduction in insurance costs. Councillor Rees-Evans questioned if this was reviewed every year as there had been an enormous increase in costs. The Director of Resources confirmed that it would be reviewed every year and agreed that the insurance costs had seen a large increase, which had been prepared for within the budget.

The Chief Fire Officer stated that the insurance companies risk profile of the Service lasts for a 5-year period which contributes to the overall insurance costs. It was reported to Members that three catastrophic incidents had contributed to the insurance costs incurred by the Service. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement reassured Members that the Fire Service had been working hard on building a good insurance profile, and were working hard to reduce the figure with insurance brokers. Members were also informed that the Service was limited to the number of companies who could provide the necessary insurance for the Service.

The Chair reported that he had worked with similar sized businesses and reduced their insurance premiums by approximately £100,000, though he was unable to comment on the blue light insurance market. Councillor Pearson asked if the co-responder scheme had contributed to the increase in the Services insurance premium. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement informed Members that the current insurance arrangements provided the necessary level of cover for co-responding activities. If, however, occasions where the FRS have to transfer patients to hospital in fire appliances due to ambulances being unavailable were to increase, then consultation with the Authority's insurance providers would need to take place

The Director of Resources referred Committee Members to Appendix 3, and updated Members on the Aberystwyth note, indicating that there was likely to be an overspend on the project following the potential introduction of a café on the second floor. It was stated to Members that a small overspend had been approved as the rental and income generated from the café would compensate the additional revenue costs. Councillor Rees-Evans specified that he would approve an overspend as he believed the facility would be a benefit to the local community. This comment was echoed by Councillor Paddison. The Director of Resources informed Committee that there were other benefits to the community from the project as there was an apprenticeship scheme and the project was also a zero waste scheme. An agreement had also been made with the business students at Aberystwyth University to undertake business proposal competitions through the medium of Welsh.

Members were also updated on the software budget. It was reported that an overspend was likely to be incurred due to the procured HR/Payroll system, as additional work had been undertaken. The Director of Resources advised Members that arrangements had been made with the internal auditor to undertake a comprehensive audit as part of the annual audit plan. It was also confirmed that additional operational and training systems were to be introduced on to this system,

so there may well be further development costs. Work is commencing on establishing what systems may be transferred to the Core HR system, and the capital budget would then have to be revisited.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Pearson, the Director of Resources advised that work would be undertaken regarding the potential to save revenue money following the introduction of these systems.

Councillor G Thomas enquired if the implementation of the new systems formed part of the National Issues Committee ICT Strategy and it was confirmed by the Director of Resources that the implementation was undertaken as a joint project with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and formed part of the ICT Strategy for Wales.

Councillor Rees-Evans questioned whether the reduction in fuel costs had been reflected in the spend, and the Director of Resources confirmed that it had been and that the Service was utilising that underspend elsewhere in the transport arena. The Chair informed Committee Members that Road insurance had increased to 9% from 6%.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee note the information contained within the Report and also acknowledge the £30k increased capital budget for Aberystwyth.

6 TO RECEIVE THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2016-2017

The Director of Resources presented the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2016-2017 and stated that it was a statutory requirement that this be approved by the Fire Authority. Members were provided with an overview of the report and Appendix A. It was confirmed to Committee that the Treasury Management Policy was the overall framework in which the Authority operates and that each year the Strategy was formulated it was based on current interest and inflation rates.

RESOLUTION

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

7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/17.

The Director of Resources presented the minimum revenue provision policy statement for the financial year 2016/17, which confirmed that the Authority is required to set aside funds from revenue each year to meet future liabilities to repay the principal element of loans and finance leases. Members were informed that the method of calculation needed to be approved by the Authority prior to the start of the year that the method is applied to.

Members were informed that the method recommended was the same used in 2015/16 which followed the guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, and that the Committee noted the content of the report for approval of the method by the Fire Authority.

Committee were also advised that the means of reducing the Fire Services' annual capital charges calculation was being looked into, following comments made by Councillor Rees-Evans at the previous Committee Meeting, and would subsequently be considered in the context of next years' budget.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for the Financial year 2016/17 incorporating both the 'Regulatory Method' for expenditure incurred before 31st March 2009, and the 'Asset Life Method with Equal Instalments' for expenditure on or after 1st April 2009 for recommendation to the full Fire Authority.

8 TO RECEIVE THE TREASURERS REPORT ON THE PRUDENTIAL CODE AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/17.

The Director of Resources presented the Treasurers Report on the Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators for the Financial Year 2016/2017 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.

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 2016/2017 budget setting process.

Councillor Rees-Evans commented on the subject matter being complicated and was happy to receive professional guidance from the Director of Resources. Councillor

Paddison thanked the Director of Resources for the report and for making a complicated subject understandable and digestible for Members.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resources Management Committee note the report and recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority

- 1) that the 2016/2017 Prudential Indicators be approved.***
- 2) That the 2015/16 Authorized Limit be increased to £29,300 k and the Operational Boundary be increased to £27,850 k for cash flow purposes.***

9 TO RECEIVE THE JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES ON THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/17.

The Chief Fire Officer and Director of Resources presented the joint report on the budget requirement for the financial year 2016/17 and provided Members with an overview of the report and its appendices.

Members were specifically referred to Appendix A which had outlined a 0.99% increase on the Constituent Authorities following budget pressures from Welsh Government.

Councillor Pritchard raised concerns that Powys County Council may not be able to make any additional payments to the Fire Authority budget following a reduction in their overall budget. In response, the Chief Fire Officer informed Committee Members that, during a recent presentation to the Powys full Council, a guarantee had been made that all Fire Stations within the Service area would remain open until March, but no guarantees could be made regarding closures to Fire Stations if the budget, including the increase, were not agreed. The Chief Fire Officer stated that the Service had demonstrated they had made a large number of efficiencies. Members were informed that the letter received from Powys County Council would be discussed with the Chair and a response provided accordingly. Councillor Pritchard requested that Members be made aware of the response provided by the Authority to Powys County Council, to which the Chief Fire Officer agreed.

Councillor G Thomas commented that she would remind the Cabinet Members at Powys County Council of previous proposals regarding the possible closures of Knighton and Montgomery Fire Stations, which had been strongly opposed by Powys Cabinet Members. The Chair of the Fire Authority, Councillor Evans stated he was sorry to hear the comments made by Councillor Pritchard though he indicated that he had not seen the letter from Powys County Council regarding this matter. The Chair also stated that he believed it to be a statutory requirement placed upon the Constituent Authorities. Councillor G Thomas responded and confirmed that she believed the letter had been sent directly to the Chair of the Fire Authority.

Councillor Curtice congratulated Gorseinon Fire Station who had recently saved a gentleman's life and emphasised the importance of appreciating the role of the Fire

Service. Councillor Paddison questioned whether Constituent Authorities had refused to support the Fire Authority budget before, and whether in fact they were indeed legally required to do so? The Clerk/Monitoring Officer confirmed that the objection to the increase was a matter which had not arisen previously and that indeed it was a statutory requirement for Constituent Authorities to agree a budget.

Councillor Rees-Evans requested an update on the Airwave Grant and as to whether any further correspondence had been received regarding it from the Welsh Government., The Chief Fire Officer responded and informed Members that an update would be provided at the Fire Authority Meeting scheduled to take place in February. The Chair of the Fire Authority, advised Members that it was a matter he would be discussing with the Minister at Welsh Government at their next meeting.

The Chief Fire Officer referred Committee Members to Appendix D, Vehicle Replacement Programme, to which the Chair, raised concerns regarding the reduction in spending on the vehicle replacement programme. The Chief Fire Officer responded and confirmed that the Service had a fixed 4-year contract with a fire appliance builder and reported that the current contract enabled the Service to receive the cheapest fire engine in Wales without compromising quality. The Chair raised the question regarding how new appliances were allocated to stations. The Chief Fire Officer stated that there was a detailed capital (vehicle) roll out programme which highlighted the needs of each station.

Councillor Rees-Evans enquired whether the new Cobra firefighting equipment being tested by the Service was to be implemented across the Service, and if so, whether there would be financial costs incurred. The Chief Fire Officer reported to Members that the equipment had been used at a few domestic property fires but had been unable to be tested fully. Councillor Rees-Evans thanked Officers for the report and updates provided.

Councillor Paddison stated that the public should be reassured that the Fire Service is run to the best of the service's ability with public money, and commented that she was happy to recommend the report for approval to the Fire Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority that the Joint Report of the Chief Fire Officer and the Director of Resources on the budget requirements for the financial year 2016/2017 be approved, in particular;

- 1) That for 2016/17, the net budget at £44,454,049 be approved (Appendix A)
- 2) That the budget of £44,454,049 for 2016/17 be part funded by £250,000 from reserves
- 3) That the Constituent Authorities be requested for the balance of £44,204,049

as their contribution for the 2016/17 financial year (0.99% cash increase).

- 4) That the Capital Programme attached at Appendix B be approved, leading to the capital financing charges shown as additional in Appendix A
- 5) That members approve the efficiencies laid out in Appendix C
- 6) That the vehicle replacement programme attached at Appendix D be approved

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE DETAILED REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2016/17

The Director of Resources presented a report on the detailed revenue budget for 2016/17 and provided an overview of appendix 1 attached to the report.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resources Management Committee recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority that the detailed revenue budget for 2016/17 be approved.

11 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Director of Resources presented a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan and provided an overview of Appendix 1 attached to the report.

Members were informed of the requirement for a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which had been formulated in line with suggested proposals from the Wales Audit Office. The Director of Resources confirmed to Members that the MTFP would be further reviewed upon completion of the Service Review, and recommended that Members approve the Medium Term Financial Plan to the Fire Authority.

Councillor G Thomas informed Members that she was happy to recommend the MTFP for approval as the Plan had been introduced following a recommendation from the Wales Audit Office.

Councillor Paddison commented on the requirements of the MTFP which she felt had been made difficult to adhere to following late budget decisions from Welsh Government, and also stated that she felt consideration should be provided to the language of Fire Service documentation surrounding the word “efficiencies”, as in her opinion the sentence on page 14, “All services will be expected to achieve continuous efficiency savings and continuous improvement.” implied that there were available funds within the Authority budget when in her view there were not.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Pearson the Clerk/Monitoring Officer confirmed that the wording of “financial settlements being visited on constituent Authorities” in paragraph 2, page 14 was correct. Councillor Pearson also noted an error on page 14; paragraph 1, to which the Director of Resources clarified would be corrected.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Resource Management Committee recommend to the Fire and Rescue Authority that the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved.

12 TO RECEIVE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT.

The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement presented a quarterly report on Health and Wellbeing to Members. Committee Members were informed that the Service had now received the sickness absence figures from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service for the 2014/15 year, which were recorded at 8.7 shifts lost, and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service which were recorded at 10.6 shifts lost. The sickness absence for Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service for the same period was 8.47 shifts lost. The absence performance for 01 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 was 9.59 shifts lost which presented an improvement. Members were informed that the overall performance for the Service was projected at 7.42 shifts lost for the current year, which would demonstrate good progress had been made in reducing the overall sickness and absence figures.

Committee were informed that the figures for ill health retirements continued to be low and Members were referred to Appendix 20 of the report which included the latest figures. The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement reassured Committee that the increase reported on the ill health retirements for On-Call personnel was for long term case management cases, which had been managed by the Service over a number of years, where the Service had assisted employees as much as possible to enable their potential return to work, but due to the nature of the operational role had been unable to return to full duties. These decisions had been determined by an Independent Qualified Medical Practitioner (IQMP).

It was also reported that the Service continued to undertake fitness assessments with operational personnel and had completed approximately 700 fitness assessments, with the remaining 300-400 to be completed by the end of the year. A 91% pass rate had been recorded, with 9% of employees not meeting the required standard. Members were informed that all employees who had not met the required standard would receive an individually tailored development plan to aid them to improve their aerobic fitness levels.

Councillor Pearson enquired what would happen to employees if they failed the fitness assessment on the second occasion? The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement confirmed that there would be more than one opportunity

to pass the assessment and that the Service's focus was on getting personnel physically fit with a view to maintaining their fitness. Councillor Pearson questioned whether employees who suffered with asthma would have difficulty passing the assessment, to which the Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement stated that all employees would be provided with the necessary support in order to meet the required fitness standards.

In response to a query raised by Councillor Pearson, the Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement responded and confirmed that the fitness standards were now a requirement of performing the role of an Operational Firefighter. Councillor Pearson questioned the outcome for employees who may not meet the required fitness standards. The Chief Fire Officer re assured Members that all the necessary support would be provided to aid employees to pass the fitness assessment. Members were also informed that should the required fitness standards not be met following all of the necessary support and actions, discussions would take place surrounding the employee's ability to perform their role under ill health or capability. Committee were further reassured that these discussions would take place only following completion of fitness assessments and after all support arrangements had been fully considered.

The Director of Service Delivery informed Members that all Officers would do everything they could to support individuals.

Councillor Pearson thanked Officers for their comments and said she was pleased to note the level of support that would be provided to employees in such instances. Councillor Pritchard enquired whether the employees who had failed their fitness assessments were across all Fire Stations within the service area, to which it was confirmed by the Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement, that the information was being reviewed and analysed to determine whether or not any trends were being identified, however, at this time there did not appear to be any obvious patterns.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Committee note the report.

13 TO RECEIVE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT UPDATE.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement presented the report and confirmed that there had been a 9% reduction on the two year on duty injury comparison, which would continue to be monitored. Members were informed that many of the reported injuries were of a muscular / skeletal nature, and the injuries by Command were higher for the Carmarthen and Powys areas due to the large number of On-Call Fire Stations. Councillor G Thomas enquired whether the injuries were off duty injuries instead of on duty injuries, and it was confirmed they were.

Members were informed that similar patterns had been recorded for on-duty injury by employee type and also that the Service was looking at providing IOSH training to Support staff employees in order to potentially reduce the number of on-duty injuries being reported. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement stated that the Service was aware that the number of recorded slips, trips and falls may be due to manual handling issues, and Committee was reassured that improvements would be introduced where necessary in order to manage employee safety.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement also confirmed to Members that progress was being made against the Corporate Risk Audits and that all the necessary information had been provided for the electronic vehicle driving licence checks, which was reported to be working well. Committee were provided with an overview of the recorded vehicle accident figures contained within the report. The Chair of the Fire Authority, Councillor W Evans questioned whether the majority of vehicle accidents were due to accessibility issues when attending incidents? The Director of Operational Support and Improvement confirmed that not all accidents occurred whilst attending incidents and that the majority actually occurred during routines. Councillor Evans was pleased to report on a published BBC article, where Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service had a good review on incident turnout figures.

Councillor Pearson enquired as to the reason why the graph on page 13 of the report reported an unknown speed recording. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement stated that he would seek further clarification on this matter and report back to Members. In response to a query raised by Councillor Pearson it was confirmed by the Director of Operational Support and Improvement that the majority of vehicle accidents were not whilst attending operational incidents and that the graph on page 14 recorded the number of fault and non-fault accidents.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement stated to Members that it was important to note that the figures contained within the quarterly report were being reduced. Councillor Rees-Evans made an enquiry regarding the number of vehicle accidents recorded whilst attending blue light incidents, as he stated that he would have expected the figure to be higher for blue light incidents due to travelling at a faster speed. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement confirmed that the number of accidents recorded whilst attending blue light incidents was on page 15 of the report. Committee Members were informed that the Services' Road Risk Group was well established and had been monitoring trends, together with working closely with the insurance company to provide reassurance that the Service is working hard to reduce risk. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement also advised Committee Members that the Service had trialled dashboard cameras, which had the potential to be removed from the vehicles and placed on the helmet of the incident commander. It was confirmed that further information regarding this would be provided to Members at the next meeting.

Councillor Paddison questioned what the 5 reports regarding unsafe conditions were, to which the Director of Operational Support and Improvement confirmed he would provide this information at the next Committee meeting. The Chair, Councillor E

Williams, informed Committee Members of the compulsory requirements for HGV/LGV good vehicles to reverse into parking spaces to reduce the number of accidents. The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement stated to Members that there were a number of groups within the Service which contributed to the information within the Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management report.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Committee note the report.

14. TO RECEIVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTERLY UPDAT E REPORT.

The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement presented a report on various Human Resources work-streams for the period of October to December 2015. Members were notified that the Service was looking into procuring an online recruitment sifting tool, which would make further efficiencies as it would reduce administrative costs. An update was provided on the Modified Pension Scheme where it was confirmed that 182 employees had expressed an interest in joining, which would incur a cost of £200,000 to the Service; a 44 employees had been identified as eligible for the pension holiday, totalling an amount of £200,000. Members were advised that there was an expectation that Welsh Government would be reimbursing the funds for this scheme.

The Committee were informed that the Service's Equality Plan 2016-2020 had been out for consultation between 01 July 2015 and 30 October 2015. It was reported that the Service had made steady progress with the Stonewall ranking. The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement provided Members with an update of the Service's establishment figures.

Councillor Pearson noted an error on the appendix of the report, to which it was confirmed, would be amended accordingly.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Committee note the report

15. TO RECEIVE THE PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING DELIVERY UPDATE

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement summarised the areas of work undertaken by the People Development and Training Delivery departments. Members were informed that a new firefighter recruits course had commenced for the Service's new operational employees.

Members were informed that the Service was working in partnership with Coleg Sir Gâr regarding the introduction of an electronic learning platform (Moodle), to enable access to external learning initiatives. It was confirmed that Skills for Justice (SFJ) Awarding Body had introduced a suite of qualifications aligned to the needs of the

Fire Service. Members were also advised that following the successful accreditation of the Investors in People (IIP) Gold award, discussions had been taking place with the Lead IIP Assessor regarding whether the Service would wish to be assessed against the Platinum standards. The Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement stated to Members that this was a newly introduced award level, however, the assessment fee for this award was costly, and further discussions would take place in due course regarding this. Councillor G Thomas encouraged the Service to take the opportunity to be assessed for the platinum award. The Director of Service Delivery agreed with these comments and believed this was an opportunity to invest in the Service. Councillor Paddison enquired what the benefits would be to the Service if the platinum award was awarded and it was confirmed that this matter was being looked into and once known an update would be provided to Members. In response to a query made by Councillor Pearson, the Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement informed Members that there was no funding currently available for this scheme.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement provided Members with an update on the Training Delivery Department and was pleased to report that the overall Risk critical skills gap for all seven Risk Critical Skills was now 3.5% which was 1.5% below the Service's Target of 5%. It was confirmed that the Cobra Cold Cut Fire Suppression system had been deployed and the trial period extended.

Councillor Pearson stated that she believed the Individual Development Review process to be an excellent process and enquired if the technical exam was a written exam and whether additional support was provided to dyslexic candidates? The Director of Operational Support and Improvement confirmed that it was and that all the necessary support was provided to candidates with learning difficulties such as additional time. Councillor Pearson thanked the Director for the responses given and reiterated that she felt the Skills for Justice Scheme was an excellent scheme and provided additional benefits to Fire Service employees.

Service Officers informed Committee Members that the next Resource Management Committee Meeting was scheduled to take place in the Earlswood Training Centre on Monday 18 April 2016. Councillor Paddison expressed her disappointment at Welsh Government cutting funding on training programmes as she felt it was vital across all areas of Service Delivery.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Committee note the report.

- 16. 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 were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 13:30.