

**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, 08 JULY 2019**

**MONDAY, 08 GORFFENNAF 2019**

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

**10.00 – 11.27**

**87% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

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

**CADEIRYDD/CHAIRPERSON:** S Joseph  
**IS-GADEIRYDD/ DEPUTY CHAIR:** D Thomas

**AELODAU/MEMBERS:** Cyng/Cllrs: M Charles, M Crowley, R Evans,  
S Freeguard, R Lewis, C Mills, R Rees-  
Evans, P Smith, T Van-Rees, E Williams, A  
Woolcock

**YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:** E G Thomas

**YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:** D Daycock (Clerk/Monitoring Officer), R  
Thomas (DCFO), K Jones (ACO), I Cray  
(ACFO), P Greenslade (AM), S Mansbridge  
(Head of Finance), C Jackson (Head of  
CCBD), Cllr J Curtice (observer)

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor E G Thomas. Notification was also received that Cllr C Mills would be arriving at the meeting later than expected.

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

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

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

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) informed Committee that Members would shortly be receiving an invitation to their local Command Headquarters to meet the respective Heads of Response and team members.

## **4 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 APRIL 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2019 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

### Matters Arising:

Page 1, Item 3, Paragraph 2: The DCFO reported that Members would receive an overview of the clinical governance arrangements in place with WAST in terms of the services that the Fire and Rescue Service was trained and insured to provide as part of the co-responder initiative.

## **5 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE SPECIAL MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 05 JUNE 2019**

The minutes of the special meeting held on 5 June 2019 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings. There were no matters arising.

## **6 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT**

The Assistant Chief Officer presented the Health and Wellbeing quarterly update report to Members. Attention was drawn to the sickness absence figures for the reporting period 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019 which showed an overall sickness absence rate of 11.1 shifts per employee. The Committee was provided with comparison absence monitoring figures for 2017/18, which showed an end of year absence figure of 9.91 shifts lost. Furthermore, the Assistant Chief Officer presented comparable absence monitoring statistics within the U.K. National context, including available figures for Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

The Assistant Chief Officer reported that the sickness absence figures for the reporting period 01 April 2019 – 31 May 2019 was 1.45 shifts per employee and represented a

projected overall figure of 8.69 shifts lost for 2019/20. The Committee acknowledged that the overall decrease was in the main attributable to a number of long term sickness cases returning to work following their absence.

Committee Members were referred to the Appendices attached to the report which detailed the absence performance for the Service. The Assistant Chief Officer informed Members that the range of information provided to Committee would be further refined for future reports. It was reported to Committee that the anxiety/depression sickness category for the current reporting period, at 45%, represented the single largest sickness absence reason within the Service. A breakdown of the muscular skeletal condition absences was also provided to the Committee which, as a group, represented 24% of all absences to date, together with a breakdown of Respiratory conditions which represented 13%, and gastro-intestinal conditions which represented 4% of all sickness absence days lost to date.

In response to a query by Cllr R Evans relating to anxiety and depression, the Assistant Chief Officer provided an overview of the range of support mechanisms in place within the Service, comprising of the provision of 'Diffusion' and 'Trauma Risk Incident Management (TRiM)' post-incident support to employees exposed to traumatic events, counselling services and stress awareness courses available to all employees. Reference was also made to the array of welfare initiatives available to employees by way of the Service's Occupational Health service, including health and wellbeing awareness events and provision of medical assessments. Members acknowledged and welcomed the Service's multi-faceted approach to supporting employees within this particular category.

Cllr R Evans highlighted the distinction between anxiety/stress illnesses and Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), which he stated required different forms of treatment, and therefore in the light of this requested a breakdown of sickness absence figures in this regard. The Assistant Chief Officer reiterated the confidential nature of the Service's Occupational Health service but agreed to make further enquiries to establish the level of information which may be available to be released to Members.

Cllr T Van-Rees enquired regarding the Service's insurance cover pertaining to medical conditions which were attributable to the Officer's active service, but which had been diagnosed post-employment. The Clerk/Monitoring Officer assured Committee that the Service had in place the appropriate personal injury insurance provision to deal with such matters agreed to provide an overview of the Service's approach to this complex issue to Committee at a future meeting.

Cllr D Thomas sought assurances from Officers that the Service was obtaining value for money in respect of its occupational health provision, which he felt could be analysed by way of a review of the number of ill-health retirements granted over a period of time. The Assistant Chief Officer duly provided an overview of the occupational health contractual arrangements in place, including the procurement processes followed to secure best value in terms of quality and price. Furthermore, the Assistant Chief Officer stressed the role of management intervention to monitor and address matters relating to employee health and wellbeing. In response to a query from Cllr M Crowley, the Assistant Chief

Officer agreed to provide statistics in relation to the number of ill-health retirements over a period of 3-5 years.

Finally, the Assistant Chief Officer provided Members with an update on the Fitness Assessment Programme which he felt had achieved an outstanding pass rate of 99% to date and placed Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service within the top 1% of best performing Fire and Rescue Service within the United Kingdom.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.*

### **7 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BUDGET OUTTURN FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/19**

The Head of Finance presented the Revenue and Capital Programme outturn position for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 to the Committee.

It was reported that the expenditure for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 showed a budget underspend of £1.052m as set out at Appendix A of the report. The Head of Finance explained that the under expenditure had subsequently been offset by the £150k contribution from reserves as agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2018, and appropriations to Earmarked Reserves totalling £729k. A synopsis of the most significant variances was presented to Members as set out at section 3.3 of the report. The Committee was informed that the surplus of £173k had been transferred to the General Fund Balance.

In response to a query from Cllr Rees-Evans, the Head of Finance further provided an overview of the earmarked reserves which would be utilised for on call review initiatives, the Northern Area Development project, coracle training exercise, operational risk management commitments, movement on ring-fenced activities and the funding of capital expenditure.

Attention was drawn to Appendix B of the report which detailed the Capital Programme Outturn position for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. Members were reminded that the approved capital programme of £7.832m had subsequently been revised to £5.421m during the financial year. The Head of Finance reported that the actual expenditure totalled £2.384m and represented an underspend of £3.036m which would be rolled-over to 2019/20 where appropriate. A synopsis of the significant project variances was provided to the Committee in terms of the vehicle replacement programme, the Machynlleth project and the Northern Area Development.

The Committee noted the grant funding allocation for the Service in 2018 which totalled £3.072m for Revenue and £103k for Capital, as set out at Appendix C of the report.

Reference was made to the Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019 set out at Appendix D of the report whereby Committee was assured to note that activity during the financial year was within the approved indicators.

Cllr T Van-Rees requested an update in respect of the delays to the Machynlleth project and sought assurances that the current facilities were adequate in the interim. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer clarified that the delays were attributable to the Service's efforts in progressing a collaborative project with Dyfed Powys Police and the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST). It was explained that whilst discussions with partner agencies commenced in the Spring of 2017, it was unfortunate to note that the collaborative project had not come to fruition due to the differing requirements of the agencies involved. Members were informed that the Service would be renovating its current site at Machynlleth and that the liaison work with the crew at Machynlleth and development work with architects was scheduled to commence during 2019. In response to a query, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer agreed to provide Cllr Van-Rees a written update to this effect to enable promulgation of this information within Powys Council.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer assured Committee that the Service would explore collaborative opportunities in respect of projects of this nature on all occasions and would consider all available avenues to ensure that best value was delivered from both a financial and service delivery perspective.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.*

### **8 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2019/20 AS AT 31 MAY 2019**

The Head of Finance presented the budget monitoring report to Members, which summarised the revenue budget and capital programme position for the 2019/20 financial year, as at 31 May 2019.

It was reported that the total approved budget was £49.867m, with the current actual net expenditure and known commitments totalling £8.828m. It was noted that the projected outturn was forecast to be within budget.

The Head of Finance reported that the budget approved by the Fire Authority on 4 February 2019 had assumed that the Firefighters Employers Pension increase would be £1.879m and that this would be fully funded by grant from Welsh Government (WG). Based on information received post-approval, it was identified that the pension increase would be £2.080m and the WG grant £1.774m. Members were reminded that a comprehensive report was presented at the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Fire Authority meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019 where it was approved that the pension funding shortfall of £306k would be funded from Reserves. It was explained that the total approved budget did not include the additional pension pressure of £201k.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix A of the report, which showed that the net expenditure and known commitments totalled £8.828m and represented 18% of the approved budget. Consideration was given to a number of factors set out at section 3.1 of the report which the budget had been based upon. In response to a query by Cllr Rees-Evans, the Head of Finance confirmed that it was cost effective for the Authority to pay its insurance premiums for the year in advance.

Committee Members were provided with an overview of the expenditure on capital projects, compared against the Approved Capital Programme set out in Appendix 2 of the report. Members were informed that the approved budget was under review and would be amended to incorporate additional resources identified since its approval, the under expenditure from 2018/19 as a result of project slippage and the reprofiling of expenditure to the correct financial year and in line with affordability.

Members then received a breakdown of the grants allocated for 2019/20 set out at Appendix C of the report, whereby a total of £3.448m revenue and £979k capital had been provided on an all-Wales basis (shared with North and South Wales Fire Authorities), excluding the allocation for National Resilience which had not yet been confirmed. It was reported that specific grants totalling £2.184m for revenue and £280k for capital had been awarded to Mid and West Wales Fire Authority which included those carried forward from the previous financial year as agreed with the funding bodies.

Attention was drawn to the prudential and treasury management indicators set out at Appendix D of the report. The Head of Finance confirmed that whilst the 'other long-term liabilities' exceeded the approved limits following adjustments processed during the previous year's Statement of Accounts process, assurances were provided to Members that the Authority's overall indebtedness position remained within the approved total.

In response to a query from Cllr R Rees-Evans, the Assistant Chief Officer explained that the position in terms of funding for the Employers' pension increase was unknown for 2020 and beyond and that this represented a significant risk to the Authority. Assurances were provided that representations had been made to the Welsh Government expressing the Authority's concern in this regard in order to seek a resolution to the matter.

Cllr A Woolcock commented that he had been informed by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council that a Fire and Rescue Authority in England had noted its intention to pursue a judicial review in respect of the Employers' pension increase. The Assistant Chief Officer explained that the Service was not aware of this case, however further enquiries would be made to establish whether such a step had been taken.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.*

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

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented Committee with the Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management Report for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 May 2019.

Members' attention was drawn to section 6 of the report which set out the number of on-duty injuries during the reporting period, together with comparable figures for 2018/19 and a breakdown of injuries by employee type and cause. Committee noted the significant increase in the number of injuries recorded for the reporting period which had increased threefold compared with the same reporting period for 2018/19, and it was recognised

that this could be attributable to an increase in operational activity during April and May 2019. Members were pleased to note a significant reduction in the figures for June 2019 which was more aligned to Service expectation.

Members were informed that only 1 injury had been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Reference was made to the Corporate Risk Audits which were undertaken to ensure that appropriate standards were maintained within the Service's buildings and facilities, in addition to the existing provision of training, safety alerts and procedures to employees in order to minimise the number of injuries. Furthermore, Members were informed that 12 reports of unsafe/unhealthy conditions and 12 reports of 'Near-Miss Events' had been reported to the Corporate Risk Department, all of which had been investigated and monitored at the Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Committee meetings. Members were pleased to note that the Service's robust Health and Safety policies were being utilised by members of staff, who were encouraged to report such issues which, in turn, ensured that any unsafe/unhealthy working conditions were addressed promptly.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided Members with details of the 1 physical attack and 1 verbal abuse reported during the reporting period. Whilst Committee was pleased to note that the number of such incidents remained low, Members endorsed the requirement to monitor incidents to ensure that all aspects of employee personal safety was monitored. In response to a query by Cllr R Evans, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer referred to the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 which came into force on 13 November 2018 and which contained a provision to enable the courts to impose enhanced penalties for assaults upon emergency service workers during the course of their duties. Furthermore, Cllr Rees-Evans referred to the CCTVs installed on all appliances which he felt could provide supporting evidence to any assaults investigated by the police.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer concluded by providing an overview of the 11 vehicle accidents which had occurred during the reporting period, together with a breakdown of vehicle accidents by cause, cost and activity. Committee noted that the majority of vehicle accidents were attributable to striking fixed objects and tended to occur in cases where large appliances travelled on narrow roads during the course of their duties.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare report be noted.***

### **10 TO RECEIVE THE HUMAN RESOURCES QUARTERLY UPDATE AND ESTABLISHMENT REPORT**

The Assistant Chief Officer presented a report on various Human Resources work-streams for the period of April to June 2019.

Committee Members were provided with a summary of the information contained within the report which comprised of various collaborative initiatives aimed at streamlining processes. It was reported that ongoing initiatives included an all-Wales Fire and Rescue Service renewal of the Human Resources information and an employment law advice portal (XpertHR) contract, an all-Wales training in respect of the 'Dying to Work' charter and Local Pension Board matters and a joint recruitment campaign with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service which was scheduled to commence in September 2019.

The Director of Resources provided a synopsis of the array of equality and diversity initiatives undertaken during the reporting period as set out in section 7 of the report which comprised of firefighter taster days, the launch of the 'he for she' campaign, representation at the 'women in the fire service' weekend course and participation in campaigns surrounding mental health and deaf awareness.

Consideration was given to a breakdown of the Service's establishment figures, retirement and recruitment profiling across each employment sector. Members were assured to note the Service's succession planning arrangements which would instigate a wholetime recruitment campaign in September 2019.

The Assistant Chief Officer provided Committee with an overview of pertinent matters relating to the Firefighters' Pension scheme. Members' attention was drawn to section 8.4 of the report which related to the Pensions Ombudsman determination in respect of the Service's treatment of allowances for pensionable pay purposes. It was reported that the Service's appeal in relation to Urban Search and Rescue Allowance had been successful whereas the Training Allowance appeal had been partially successful. Furthermore, the Committee was informed that the Fire Brigade's Union appeal in relation to Self-Rostered Crewing and Day Crewing Allowances was successful, though it was highlighted that the Service already treated full Day Crewing Allowances and part of the Self-Rostered Crewing Allowances as pensionable. Members were informed that the Service had not appealed the decision and had applied the remedy set out in the judgement to the complainants. Committee further noted that work was now ongoing in respect of the broader application of the judgement to members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the retrospective treatment of pension contributions.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Human Resources Quarterly Update and Establishment Report be noted.***

- 11 ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100(B)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972.**

There was no other urgent items of business. The meeting closed at 11.27.