

**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, 15 APRIL 2019**

**MONDAY, 15 EBRILL 2019**

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

**10.00 – 11.12**

**62% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

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

**CADEIRYDD/CHAIRPERSON:** M Crowley  
**IS-GADEIRYDD/ DEPUTY CHAIR:** S Joseph

**AELODAU/MEMBERS:** Cyng/Cllrs: A Brinn, M Charles, R Lewis,  
R Rees-Evans, E G Thomas, E Williams

**YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:** J Hale, C Mills, D Thomas, J Warman

**YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:** D Daycock (Clerk/Monitoring Officer), R Hemingway (Section 151 Officer Representative), R Thomas (DCFO), K Jones (ACO), I Cray (ACFO), C Flannery (AM), M Harries (AM), S Phillips (Deputy Head of Finance), Cllr C Anderson (observer)

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Hale, C Mills, D Thomas and J Warman.

## **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.

All Members present declared a personal interest in respect of Item 5 of the Agenda, namely the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring report.

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer reminded those present of their requirement to declare any other relevant personal or prejudicial interests arising from any business to be discussed at the meeting.

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

The Chair referred with deep sadness to the recent sudden passing of Fire Authority Member, Cllr Paul James. Tributes were paid to Cllr James, whose passing had sent a great sense of sorrow and shock throughout the Fire Authority and also his local community. Members acknowledged Cllr James' enthusiasm, passion and dedication to the Fire Authority and stated that his contribution would be sorely missed. Members and Officers stood in silence as a mark of respect.

Cllr R Lewis drew Committee's attention to a newspaper article which referred to the tragic death of an individual in the Gower area, following a 5-hour delay from the original emergency call to the arrival of an Ambulance. Cllr R Lewis expressed the view that the affected family had been badly let down by the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) and stated that he did not consider their services to be fit for purpose. In this regard, Cllr R Lewis expressed his disappointment that Reynoldston Fire Station were not mobilised to attend this, and indeed other medical response incidents, despite the significant fundraising efforts undertaken by the local community to purchase a co-responder vehicle, and station personnel being eager to attend such incidents. The DCFO noted Councillor Lewis' comments and explained the re-categorisation of calls that had taken place which meant that the WAST was mobilising the Service to attend incidents in accordance with the level of training provided to Service employees, location of incidents and the resources available. The DCFO further provided assurances to the Committee that he would make enquiries to obtain further information in respect of the Service's mobilisation to the incident referred to by Cllr Lewis. Cllr R Rees-Evans stressed that he felt that resources such as co-responder vehicles should be utilised within communities wherever available in order to provide a potentially life-saving medical service within local communities. In response to a query from Cllr Rees-Evans, it was agreed that statistics would be provided in respect of the use of the co-responder vehicles.

The DCFO then provided a synopsis of three recent incidents within the Swansea and Neath Port Talbot areas, two of which had resulted in casualty rescues and one that had sadly concluded in a fire fatality.

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Cllr Mansel Charles, who had returned to the Fire Authority as a Carmarthenshire Representative in place of Cllr Colin Evans.

**4 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2019 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

There were no matters arising.

**5 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2018/19 AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2019**

The Section 151 Officer Representative presented the budget monitoring report to Members, which summarised the revenue budget and capital programme position for the 2018/19 financial year, as at 28 February 2019.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report, which showed a forecast outturn of £46.102m and represented a projected underspend of £707k. Members were provided with an overview of the rationale for the variances, as set out in section 3 of the report in terms of the Transport, Supplies & Services, Pensions budget lines. It was explained to Members that the increased on-call expenditure incurred as a result of high spate activity had been offset by a larger underspend on wholetime firefighters resulting from both vacancies and the associated rates of pay during initial period of employment. Reference was also made to the forecasted £424k underspend attributable to Capital Financing and Leasing as a result of the anticipated Minimum Revenue Provision required from Capital expenditure. Furthermore, it was reported that lower interest rates had resulted in lower borrowing costs and Members were pleased to note that the Authority had maintained a prudent financial decision regarding the facility of an internally borrowed position which had delayed the need to raise new debt.

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 also informed that the forecast outturn amounted to £4.503m and that this represented an underspend of £918k due to the slippage of projects into 2019/20, of which £500k was attributable to the Northern Area Development.

Members then received a breakdown of the grants allocated for 2018/19, whereby a total of £3.706m revenue and £1.231m capital had been provided on an all-Wales basis (shared with North and South Wales Fire Authorities). It was reported that four specific revenue grants totalling £2.146m had been awarded to Mid and West Wales Fire Authority, including £1.250m for the GovTech Catalyst innovation challenge.

Attention was drawn to the prudential and treasury management indicators set out at Appendix 4 of the report. The Section 151 Officer Representative 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 at only around two thirds of the levels approved by Members.

In response to concerns raised by the Chair in respect of the supply of water at incidents, the ACFO assured Members that Welsh Water liaised with the Service regarding the location of hydrants. Members were further assured to note that fire hydrant information was available to crew members by way of the mobile data system, and that the Service's Hydrant Officers would attend large scale incidents to ensure the most appropriate and effective use of hydrants.

## **RESOLUTION**

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

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

The ACFO presented Committee with the Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management Report for the period 1 April 2018 to 28 February 2019.

Members were provided with an update of key health and safety performance for the reporting period in respect of on duty injuries by location, employee type and cause. Members noted that 61 on-duty injuries had been reported, compared with 63 during the same reporting period in 2017/18. Members were informed that a total of 7 injuries had been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), which represented a reduction of 7 injuries compared with the same reporting period in 2017/18.

The ACFO provided Members with a synopsis of the 19 reported attacks on firefighters, 10 of which had been categorised as verbal abuse, 7 physical attacks and 2 other acts of aggression. Members were disappointed to note that the number of attacks had increased by 8 compared with the same reporting period for 2017/18, however, it was acknowledged that the overall number of attacks was low comparable to other Services and public sector organisations Nationally. Reference was also made to the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 which came into force on 13 November 2018 in response to the increase in the number of assaults on emergency workers in recent years and it was hoped that such legislation would assist in reducing the number of attacks. Cllr S Joseph also commended Station Open Days as a means of positively engaging with local communities which he hoped could discourage such attacks on crews.

In response to a query by Cllr S Joseph, Members were informed that there were no set trends that could be established in relation to the location of attacks due to the low numbers involved; however, the number of attacks were generally reflective of the areas incurring a greater number of incidents, namely Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. Following a query from Cllr A Brinn, the ACFO confirmed that 2 of the 19 attacks occurred in the Pembrokeshire area.

In response to a request from Cllr E Thomas, the ACFO agreed to make enquiries to ascertain if the Service captured data in respect of the age profiling of attackers and report back to the Committee accordingly.

The Chair enquired whether there were any known instances of attacks resulting in sickness absence for the affected individuals. The ACFO agreed to look into the matter and report back to the Committee.

The ACFO stated that 33 reports of unsafe/unhealthy conditions and 39 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 to ensure that appropriate standards were maintained within the Service's buildings and facilities.

The ACFO concluded by providing an overview of the 99 vehicle accidents which had occurred during the reporting period, together with a breakdown of vehicle accidents by cause, speed and activity. Committee was also provided with comparison figures for the cost of vehicle accidents over a five-year period which showed a steady downward trend in the vehicle repair costs, with the exception of the 2017/18 reporting period. Members were provided with a synopsis of the Rural Response Pump fire that occurred in 2017/18 and were assured that there were no inherent faults with the vehicle that caused the fire.

## **RESOLUTION**

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

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

The Director of Resources 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 – 28 February 2019 which showed an overall sickness rate of 10.17 shifts per employee and equated to a projected overall figure of 11.09 shifts per employee for 2018/19. The Committee was provided with comparison absence monitoring figures for 2017/18, which showed an end of year absence figure of 8.97 shifts lost. The Director of Resources presented absence monitoring statistics within the National context, comprising figures provided by the CIPD absence survey 2018, Office of National Statistics 2017 and both English and Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

Committee Members were referred to the Appendices attached to the report which detailed the absence performance for the Service. It was reported to Committee that the anxiety/depression sickness category, at 26.78%, represented the single largest sickness absence reason within the Service. A breakdown of the muscular skeletal conditions was also provided to the Committee which, as a group, represented 31.12% of all absences to date, together with a breakdown of Respiratory conditions which represented 10.19% of all sickness absence days lost to date.

Committee acknowledged that the increase in sickness figures could be attributed to a limited number of long-term absences which had consequently skewed the overall sickness absence figure; and in particular cases where muscular-skeletal conditions, and their remedies, were subject to lengthy NHS waiting times.

Finally, the Director of Resources provided Members with an update on the Fitness Assessment Programme. The Committee was delighted to note that occupational health investment by way of a dedicated fitness team and provision of fitness equipment had contributed to the success of the programme which had achieved a 99% pass rate 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. It was acknowledged however that gym equipment had been purchased by some crew members which was stored and utilised on Service premises and that the Service had provided a small quantity of loose weights, watt bikes and a circuit training programme for all stations. The Director of Resources provided an overview of the assistance and support provided to employees who had not met the required fitness by way of tailored fitness improvement programmes.

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.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Health and Wellbeing report be noted.***

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

The Director of Resources presented a report on various Human Resources work-streams for the period of January to March 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 and avoiding duplication. It was reported that ongoing initiatives included renewal of the Human Resources information and advice portal (XpertHR) contract and the signing up to the Dying to Work Charter which aimed to improve employment rights for working people following a terminal illness diagnosis.

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.

Consideration was given to a breakdown of the Service's establishment figures, retirement and recruitment profiling across each employment sector.

The Director of Resources 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 was considering the merits of a possible appeal against the above decision.

## **RESOLUTION**

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

### **9 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2018-2019**

The Director of Resources presented the Annual Equality Report for 2018-2019.

Members gave consideration to Appendix 1 of the report which provided information on Service activities in terms of engagement with the diverse communities served, together with a range of key equality data which would assist in shaping the strategic direction of the Service. It was reported to Committee Members that the Service aimed to ensure equality of opportunity in service provision and also access to services and information, and also inclusion within decision making processes and policies, in order to strive towards the elimination of discrimination against any groups or individuals.

It was recognised that the Service's staff profile was heavily male orientated and accordingly Members were assured to note the Service's ongoing efforts in promoting the organisation as an employer of choice for all sectors of the community.

Cllr R Rees-Evans commended the Service's equality and diversity activities, which he considered to be embedded across the organisation, with the key principles of the Equality Act 2010 and Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 being fully supported.

In response to a query by the Chair, the Director of Resources clarified that the range of staff data including ethnicity, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation was captured and updated by way of periodic monitoring reports.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the content of the Service's Annual Equality Report for 2018-2019 be noted.***

### **12 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 business. The meeting closed at 11.12.