

**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, 21 IONAWR 2019

MONDAY, 21 JANUARY 2019

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

10.00 – 11.04

60% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRPERSON: M Crowley
IS-GADEIRYDD/ DEPUTY CHAIR

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: A Brinn, M Charles, R Lewis,
R Rees-Evans, E Williams, A Woolcock, C
Evans, J Warman

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: J Hale, S Joseph, E G Thomas (Council
Business), T Van-Rees

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: D Daycock (Clerk/Monitoring Officer), R
Hemingway (Section 151 Officer
Representative), C Davies (CFO), R Quin
(T/DCFO), R Thomas (T/ACFO), K Jones
(ACO), I Cray (AM), S Jenkins (AM), P
Greenslade(T/AM), C Jackson, (Head of
CCBD), S Mansbridge (Head of Finance),
Cllr J Curtice (observer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Hale, S Joseph, E G Thomas (Council Business) and T Van-Rees.

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 Chair welcomed Members to the first meeting of 2019 and expressed the view that whilst the financial forecast would require difficult decision making for the year ahead, it was hoped that significant cuts would not be made to the Fire and Rescue Authority as he considered the provision of life-saving emergency services vital to the communities of Mid and West Wales.

The Chair congratulated T/ACFO Thomas, who would be taking up his new role as Deputy Chief Fire Officer of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service in March 2019.

4 TO CONFIRM AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2018 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings, subject to the following amendment:

Cllr A Brinn to be added to the list of apologies.

There were no matters arising.

5 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2018/19 AS AT 30TH NOVEMBER 2018

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 30 November 2018.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report, which showed a forecast outturn of £46.617m as at the 30th November 2018 and represented a projected underspend of £192k. Members were provided with an overview of the rationale for the variances, as set out in section 3 of the report. In response to a query, the Section 151 Officer Representative agreed to provide Cllr Rees-Evans with further detail in respect of the variance related to the Transport department.

Committee Members were provided with an overview of the expenditure on capital projects as at 30 November 2018, compared against the Approved Capital Programme set out in Appendix 2 of the report. Members were informed that the forecast outturn amounted to £5.191m and represented an underspend of £230k. It was also recognised

that the Northern Area Development project was under review and could result in further slippage.

Members received a breakdown of the grants allocated for 2018/19, whereby a total of £3.481m revenue and £800k 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 £1.972m had been awarded to Mid and West Wales Fire Authority, including £1.250m for the GovTech Catalyst innovation challenge.

The Section 151 Officer Representative concluded by confirming to Members that all activity was in line with the approved prudential and treasury management indicators for 2018/19, as set out in Appendix 4 of the report.

RESOLUTION

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

6 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 – 31 December 2018 which showed an overall sickness rate of 7.93 shifts per employee and equated to a projected overall figure of 10.57 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 9.6 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 North and South Wales 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 27.5%, 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 32.33% of all absences to date.

Members were reminded that it was not possible to calculate the number of shifts lost for on-call employees, therefore this category was omitted from the Service's sickness calculations. Nevertheless, Committee Members were assured that the Service's sickness and absence procedures applied equally across all its employee sectors.

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 pleased 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. Cllr Woolcock congratulated the achievements of the Service in this regard, which ensured that its frontline employees were fit for operational duties. However, concerns were also raised by Cllr Woolcock in respect of the health and wellbeing of those members of staff who were unable to meet the required fitness criteria and queried whether the continuous failure rate of 1% related to the same individuals. The Director of Resources duly provided an overview of the National guidance published in this regard, together with the assistance and support provided to employees by the Service by way of tailored fitness improvement programmes. In response to comments made by Cllr C Evans, the Director of Resources confirmed that the Service's capability policy could be invoked if required to deal with any continual failure of the fitness assessment programme to ensure consistency across the organisation.

Reference was made to the Service's intervention strategies in respect of the number of on-duty and off-duty injuries incurred. Some Members felt that a consistency of approach was required to ensure fairness across the organisation whereas other Members expressed the view that such instances should be dealt with on a case by case basis according to individual requirements and following a functional assessment undertaken by the Occupational Health Team.

RESOLUTION

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

7 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The T/ACFO presented Committee with the Health, Safety and Welfare Performance Management Report for the period 1 April 2018 to 30 November 2018.

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 43 on-duty injuries had been reported, compared with 48 during the same reporting period in 2017/18. Members were informed that a total of 5 injuries had been reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). In response to a query from Cllr Rees-Evans, the T/ACFO confirmed that the Occupational Health service would determine an employee's fitness to return to duty.

The T/ACFO informed Committee that 26 reports of unsafe/unhealthy conditions and 31 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.

The T/ACFO also provided Members with a synopsis of the 13 reported attacks on firefighters, 5 of which had been categorised as verbal abuse, 7 physical attacks and 1 other act of aggression. Members were assured that, whilst it was pleasing that the

overall number of attacks were low comparable to other Services Nationally, every attack was investigated, and full assistance was provided to the Police during the course of an investigation, including provision of CCTV footage and any other supporting evidence. It was also recognised that the Service's medical response provision contributed to the figures, and therefore some attacks were not necessarily malicious or premeditated. In response to a query by the Chair, it was confirmed that there were no known instances of physical attacks resulting in sickness absence for the affected individuals.

The T/ACFO reported that that 26 reports of unsafe/unhealthy conditions and 31 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 T/ACFO concluded by providing an overview of the 69 vehicle accidents which had occurred during the reporting period, together with a breakdown of vehicle accidents by cause, cost, speed and activity. Cllr Rees-Evans enquired whether there was a correlation between vehicle accidents and the over-expenditure within the Transport department. The T/CHOSI clarified that the over-expenditure related to a restructure which had aligned the procurement section with the transport department. It was explained that the resultant change of processes for equipment testing within the new structure had incurred a frontloaded cost which would derive longer term savings. Furthermore, Members were informed that an engine issue with an appliance operating in flood water had resulted in a further cost borne by the Transport department.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare 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 July to December 2018.

Committee Members were provided with a summary of the information contained within the report which comprised of various collaboration initiatives aimed at streamlining processes and avoiding duplication. It was reported that ongoing initiatives included the Human Resources information and advice portal (XpertHR) which would be renewed in April 2019, Procedural Guidance Document in respect of the online Job Evaluation software system and the harmonisation of policies relating to Fire and Rescue Service Control personnel to ensure consistency across all people-related procedures.

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. Of particular interest to Members was the

establishment figures for the on-call sector whereby it was recognised that a significant number of staff were eligible to retire which would leave a detrimental skills gap within the organisation. Members were pleased to note that a total of 66 on-call recruits had been appointed since April 2018, with a further 74 applicants to be appointed to meet station cover requirements subject to appropriate selection testing.

Attention was drawn to section 8.4 of the report which related to the Pensions Ombudsman determination in respect of complaints relating to the Service's treatment of allowances for pensionable pay purposes. It was reported that the Pensions Ombudsman had ruled that Self Rostered Crewing Allowance and Day Crewing Allowance should not be treated as pensionable, and that Urban Search and Rescue Allowance and Training Allowance should be treated as pensionable. The Director of Resources confirmed that the Service had appealed the decision of the Pensions Ombudsman to the High Court, the outcome of which was expected in March 2019.

The Director of Resources provided an overview of a legal challenge which related to a determination of the Court of Appeal around firefighters' transition arrangements moving from one pension scheme to another. In response to a query by Cllr C Evans, Members were informed that the Government had applied for permission to appeal the determination to the Supreme Court.

RESOLUTION

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

9 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE CHANGES IN CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS AND PROCUREMENT PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE

The Corporate Head of Resources presented a report on the proposed changes in contract standing orders and procurement procedural guidance. It was reported that the standardisation of Contract Standing Orders was undertaken on an All-Wales basis in 2014, and a review of the documentation was considered appropriate following the period of consolidation, with a view to further refining processes.

The summary of the proposed changes, as set out at Appendix 3 of the report, was considered by the Committee.

Cllr J Warman drew attention to section 15 of the report and was pleased to note the increased opportunities which would be made available to local Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) following the raised three-quote threshold to £20k. A number of Members echoed these sentiments and considered SMEs to be an integral part of the communities of Mid and West Wales. In response to queries from Cllrs Warman and Woolcock, the Corporate Head of Resources provided an overview of the electronic platform (sell2wales) which had replaced traditional submission of paper tenders. Members were assured that assistance provided to SMEs by the National Procurement Service (NPS) by way of set training days on the sell2wales portal and other initiatives undertaken to support local businesses and encourage submission of tender applications.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the changes to the Contract Standing Orders be recommended for approval by the Fire Authority.

- 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 11.04.