

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN
CYMRU**



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

**COFNODION Y PWYLLGOR PERSONÉL
MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

DYDD LLUN, 3 MAWRTH 2008

MONDAY, 3 MARCH 2008

***PENCADLYS Y GWASANAETH TÂN,
HEOL LLWYN PISGWYDD, CAERFYRDDIN***

***FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS,
LIME GROVE AVENUE, CARMARTHEN***

11.00 – 11.55

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:	D R James
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:	F M Jones
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: C J Crowley, K Harris, M Williams, P Llewellyn
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	K Becton, P James
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	D MacKay, R Smith, E Aitken, A Howells, K Jones, E Mills, P Bailey, J Maunder

1. PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair, on behalf of all Members, extended sympathy to Councillor T E Evans on the recent passing of his Mother.

Councillor C Crowley was welcomed back to the Authority following his short stay in hospital. Members were informed that Councillor P Spender had stood down from the Authority in preparation for taking up her new role as High Sheriff of West Glamorgan. It was agreed that a letter of appreciation for her contribution to the Authority be sent to Cllr Spender, wishing her well in her new role.

Members were aware that Councillor D R James would not be seeking re-election in the forthcoming local elections and that this would be his last meeting as Chair of Personnel Committee. Councillor F Jones, on behalf of Members, paid tribute to Councillor James for the sterling contribution he had made to the Authority over a period of many years and wished him well for the future.

2. DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer declared an interest in agenda item 12 and retired from the meeting during discussion of that item

3. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2007

The minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 3RD December 2007 were received and approved as a true record.

4. TO RECEIVE THE CHAPLAINS ANNUAL REPORT

The Chaplains Annual Report was presented by the Reverend Jonathan Davies who stated that 2007 had been a busy year for the Service Chaplains, and highlighted the significant and varied work undertaken on a voluntary basis by each of the Chaplains.

It was noted that a very successful Annual Chaplain's Training day had been held at Swansea Central Fire Station on the 8th February 2008 during which the Reverend Illtyd Protheroe had taken part in a line rescue demonstration.

Reverend Davies reported that the Chaplains would welcome the opportunity to play a role in the Induction Programmes for new recruits and had particularly enjoyed taking part in a number of training exercises during 2007. The Chaplains wished to convey their grateful thanks to Chief Fire Officer Mackay for his encouragement throughout his time in office and wished him well in his future retirement. They also expressed grateful thanks to the Fire Authority Members and all personnel for their welcome and continued support.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted and the appreciation of Members be noted for the continued support and assistance provided by the Chaplains.

5. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE INVESTOR IN PEOPLE STANDARD

Members were informed that the Service had recently received notification that it had met the IIP Standard and would therefore achieve recognition as an Investor in People for the purpose of organisational learning and development. Feedback from the Assessor and the IIP Ratification Panel had been positive and had recognised the improvements made by the Service over the preceding 12 months.

Members congratulated all staff who had been involved in attaining the Standard and Councillor R James presented the Chief Fire Officer with the IIP Award

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Service's success in achieving the IIP Award be noted

6. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

A number of requests had been received from employees wishing to engage in Secondary Employment as outlined in Grey Book Conditions of Service, and in line with the Authority's policy, which were presented to Members for consideration.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted

7. TO CONSIDER A REPORT ON THE FIRE CONTROL REVIEW UPDATE

Members were provided with an update on progress made to date with the implementation of the Control Review. This progress has been made since the initial report to the Fire Authority on 29th October 2007 following which the

scheduled implementation plan had continued on target.

The second group of new entrants had successfully completed their initial training course and became fully operational during February; they had since joined their colleagues on the support watches bringing the support level of staff to full strength. With the introduction of variable crewing there had been a significant decrease in the number of overtime shifts required reducing by approximately 50% during the last two months.

The Chair of the Personnel Committee, Councillor Mr. R. James had visited the Control Room on 24th January as part of the reporting process to review the new staffing arrangements. The staff had welcomed the visit and appreciated the opportunity to discuss their observations and concerns.

It was noted that during 2008 Control would have an unprecedented number of staff on maternity leave with 15% of control operators simultaneously on maternity leave between February and October. It was intended to cover these absences with personnel from the support watches, who were conditioned to a flexible part-time contract of employment and who would provide sufficient flexibility to cover such eventualities.

An Independent Health check would be carried out by the Wales Audit Office during 2008/09 where an independent review of the implementation would be carried out, the terms of reference for which will be presented to the next meeting of the Personnel Committee.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted and that the benefits of the changes be noted.

8. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AND ILL HEALTH

The sickness absence figures for each employee category for the period April 2007 to January 2008 were received together with the ill-health retirement statistics for the same period. Referring to the sickness absence statistics, Committee noted that the current figures indicated an overall average of 5.01 shifts lost throughout all employee sectors, and that the overall end of year current "performance" would be 6.01 shifts lost, which was within the target of 6.5. Achieving this target would place the Service well within the upper quartile of best performing fire and rescue services. Whilst there were still a few months left until the final end of year statistics were compiled, Committee noted the significant improvements that had been made, year on year, in the area of attendance management.

The Welsh Audit Office had recently undertaken a review of the Service's Absence Management and Occupational Health provision and Members were informed that Audit had found that the organisation had set the standard within

this area. Audit also found that significant progress had been made in moving towards the national health and wellbeing agenda in terms of providing advice on health lifestyle choices and nutrition which played a key part in occupational health assessments. Further work would take place within this area during 2008/9 as part of the Service's intention to apply for the Corporate Health Award in recognition of its commitment to organisational wellbeing.

The ill-health retirement statistics figures remained comparatively low within both the Firefighters Pension Scheme and Local Government Pension Scheme arrangements and continued to be managed on a case by case basis.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The efforts of the Human Resources Team in training Managers on the application of the Authority's Sickness absence Monitoring Policy be commended and the positive trend in the report be noted.

9. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE NJC JOINT PROTOCOL FOR BETTER INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS WITHIN FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

Reference was made to a report which was considered at the last meeting regarding the NJC Circular 08/07 which related to the Joint Protocol Guidance for Better Industrial Relations in the Fire Service. Accordingly, the Chair of Personnel Committee and Head of Human Resources attended the launch of the Joint Protocol in London on the 17 January 2008 as part of the communication process which was attended by delegates from all UK Fire and Rescue Services

A further copy of the Joint Protocol was attached for Members' attention and whilst the majority of the principles contained within the document formed the basis of trade union negotiation and consultation within the Service, further work would take place with local officials within the coming weeks as part of a revised Facilities Agreement.

It was RESOLVED that

The principles contained within the NJC Joint Protocol Agreement be noted

10. TO RECEIVE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Health and Safety Management Performance Report was considered and Members were pleased to learn that the end of year figures for the number of On Duty injuries reported within the Service for 2007 was 82. This figure

represented a 30% reduction in reported On Duty Injuries against 2006 and was in fact the lowest number ever recorded by the Service since detailed injury statistics commenced in 2001.

This reduction had in the main been attributed to the positive awareness of workplace health, safety and welfare standards by County Command and Departmental personnel on aspects of safety associated with their daily work. While this reduction in On Duty injuries was a significant milestone for the Service, the Health and Safety department continued to raise and maintain awareness of workplace safety related matters in an effort to improve upon this performance as part of its continuous improvement strategy.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The Health and Safety report be received and noted

11. RETAINED FIREFIGHTERS AND THE PART TIME WORK (PREVENTION OF LESS FAVOURABLE TREATMENT) REGULATIONS: EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL 2007

Consideration was given to the latest NJC Employers Circular EMP/01/08 and Members were aware that the issue of whether or not retained duty system firefighters carried out the same, or broadly similar work, to their wholetime comparators had been the subject of consideration by the House of Lords. Members recalled this case had been passed back to the Employment Tribunal and a decision had been anticipated in March 2007. However, the latest advice from the National Employers' indicated that the Tribunal had reserved its decision and would provide an update by Easter 2008. This issue had been the subject of a cost-sharing arrangement with the legal costs being apportioned to all UK Fire Services with the most recent costs to be invoiced to individual organisations shortly.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted

12. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Members were aware that the Chief Fire Officer, Douglas Mackay, has submitted his formal notice of his intention to retire from the Service on the 15 June 2008, as was reported at the Fire Authority meeting held on 4 February 2008. The Fire Authority had approved the recommendation to allow the

Personnel Committee to consider the appropriate arrangements for the appointment process of a successor.

The Authority had approximately three months in which to appoint a successor and against this timescale it was imperative that the appointment process commenced as soon as possible, particularly whilst bearing in mind that notice periods may have to be served of up to three months.

It was noted that the Chief Fire Officer had already offered to provide assistance in relation to the technical assessment of candidates as part of the recruitment and selection process.

An informal meeting with the Chair of Committee had been held and a draft timetable drawn-up for consideration by the Personnel Committee:

4 March 2008 – Advertisement to be made through the Fire Internetworking Data Service (FINDS)

25 March 2008 – Closing date

27 March 2008 – Shortlisting Panel

07 April 2008 – Formal Interviews

With regard to the composition of the Shortlisting Panel, Members noted that representation had previously consisted of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Fire Authority, the Chair and Vice Chair of Personnel Committee, the Chairs of the Resources and Performance Review and Audit Committees, together with the two Group Leaders.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- i) The proposed recruitment and selection process be approved*
- ii) The composition of the selection panel be approved*
- iii) The advertisement to be placed through the Fire Internetworking Data Service (FINDS)*