

**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, 21 GORFFENNAF 2008  
MONDAY, 21 JULY 2008**

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

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

**11.00 – 12.30**

**PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:	C Philpott
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:	M Williams
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: P Llewellyn, A Jopling, T Devichand, J Holmes, R Llewellyn
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	C Crowley, P James
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	E Aitken, A Howells, K Jones, P Coleman, J Maunder, G Davies

## 1. PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair welcomed new and continuing Members to the first meeting of the Personnel Committee following the Local Elections and also extended a welcome to ACFO Phil Coleman, the new lead officer of the Committee.

## 2. DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared

## 3. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 MARCH 2008

The minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 3 March 2008 were received and approved as a true record.

## 4. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2008

The minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 11 June 2008 were received and approved as a true record.

## 5. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AND ILL HEALTH

Prior to the formal discussion on the report on attendance and ill health, the Head of People and Organisational Development provided Members with a brief overview of the main areas of responsibility for the newly formed People and Organisational Services Department which now encompassed that of Human Resources and Training and Development.

The Chair informed new Members that the Service encouraged them to engage in the work of the various departments by making occasional visits and even participating in physical activities where possible such as BA or rope rescue. It was suggested that a visit be arranged as soon as practicable for those Members who hadn't visited the training centre at Earlswood and arrangements would be put in place in due course. Members were also encouraged to visit their local fire stations and/or Commands and it was noted that the County Commanders were in the process of making arrangements for these visits commencing in September. Members were reminded of the correct protocol in making such visits in that all such requests were to be made through the County Commander in the first instance.

The re-naming of the Personnel Committee was also discussed in order to reflect the breadth of its role and the Clerk confirmed that this would be formally discussed by the Fire Authority at their September meeting as part of the review of the Constitution. Members suggested that the Committee be re named ***The People, Organisational and Development Committee***.

The sickness absence figures for each employee category for the period April –

June 2008 were considered together including the incidence of long term sickness.

Committee noted that current performance across all employment sectors was relatively good, resulting in an overall shifts lost figure of 1.54 which equated to an end of year projected shifts lost figure of 6.17. It was reported that having reached the target figure for 2007-08 with an overall figure of 6.10, the 2008-09 target had been further reduced to 5.8 shifts lost which, whilst being extremely challenging, was nevertheless considered achievable through continued application of the Service's Sickness Absence Monitoring Procedures together with early intervention via the organisation's Occupational Health Practitioners.

Members were pleased to note that the Service remained within the upper quartile of best performing Fire & Rescue Services within the area of sickness absence management, and had been featured in the Wales Audit Office website on Public Services in Wales as an exemplary of best practice. Members noted that the year on year improvements had been achieved through sound management practices, changes in organisational mind-set and in the role of Caerphilly Occupational Health Services in developing the existing framework in order that the Service could allow individuals to return to work, or remain in work, during periods of ill-health. This had taken considerable time and a great deal of management investment, but it was now opportune to enter into an open market tender process for the provision of occupational health services. Such a process would be subject to European Purchasing Regulations which could take up to 9-12 months but nevertheless would enable the organisation to test the market for the provision of occupational health services.

County Commander Gethin Davies attended the meeting in order to provide an overview of how Carmarthenshire Command managed sickness absence by devolving the responsibility down to the managers at Station level.

On consideration of ill health retirement statistics, Committee noted that the figures remained comparatively low throughout all employee categories and continued to be managed robustly within the guidance contained within the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulations.

Members commended all Managers in their robust handling of sickness absence which had led to the continuing downward trend in the figures.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

- i) The report on sickness and Ill health be received and noted**
- ii) Approval be given for the service to enter into an open-market tendering process for the provision of occupational health services**
- iii) Arrangements be made for Members to undertake a visit to**

- Earlswood**
- iv) **The recommendation be made to the Fire Authority that the Personnel Committee be renamed the People, Organisational and Development Committee**

**6. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SIT ON THE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

Members gave consideration to the terms of reference of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) upon which the Personnel Committee was represented by the Chair and Vice Chair together with two other Members. The Clerk asked that nominations for these appointments be therefore sought.

Additionally, it had been necessary to make some changes to the terms of reference of the JCC which had been highlighted for Members' consideration. Whilst in the main these were limited to changes in designation of officers etc., Committee were requested to consider the frequency of such meetings given that there had been insufficient work to convene such meetings on a quarterly basis. It was recommended that the Committee meet on a six monthly basis; with the ability to meet outside that cycle should circumstances dictate.

**RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED*

- i) ***That in addition to the Chair and Vic of Committee, Councillors Tegwen Devichand and Alan Jopling be appointed to the Joint Consultative Committee***
- ii) ***That the revised terms of reference be approved including that the JCC meet on a six monthly basis with additional meetings convened should circumstances dictate.***

**7. 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.

For the information of new Members, the Head of People and Organisational Development advised on the background and procedures that staff had to follow in order to apply for secondary employment including the cap on earnings. It was agreed that this criteria be provided to Members at the next meeting.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted and that the criteria for approval of secondary employment be provided for Members at the next meeting.*

### **8. 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 since the previous report made to the Personnel Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008.

It was noted that personnel on the core and support watches, day staff and the department's management structure were now in position, this having been achieved through a combination of recruitment, voluntary transfer and promotion. It was emphasised that no staff had been moved against their will, with the majority of staff remaining on their current agreed rota system of 2 days, 2 nights followed by four rota days. The crewing system within the department now delivered a crewing level that matched the expected demand in activity, for example four personnel between midnight and midday and five between midday and midnight.

Following the introduction of variable crewing there had been a significant decrease in the amount of overtime shifts worked by core watch personnel although there had been an overall increase in the number of hours worked by support watch personnel, mainly due to the unprecedented number of personnel on maternity leave. The department could now facilitate flexible working for control personnel returning from maternity leave, reducing their hours of work to suit their new family circumstances and during July the first member of staff would take advantage of these flexible arrangements.

The Wales Audit Office had been invited to undertake an evaluation of the review of Service Control, which took place during June and the outcome would be reported to the next Committee meeting.

Members who had not already visited Service Control as part of their induction training were invited to arrange a visit by contacting the Corporate Communications and Member Support Manager in the first instance.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted*

## **9. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT – PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEWS**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008 the Fire Authority had agreed to submit a declaration of intent outlining the Fire Authority's intention to apply for the Wales Charter for Member Support & Development. Members had received a presentation on the background to the Charter and its implications for Members during the course of their induction training in June. Since then Officers had met with the Welsh Local Government Association when the Authority's intention to apply for the bronze level of the Charter had been confirmed which had to be submitted by the end of July 2008. A paper providing further detail of the application process and the implications for Members was included for Committee's attention.

It was noted that Criteria 2 within the framework stated that:

“office holders receive regular personal support & and development interviews which are based on role descriptions”.

Committee were reminded that Officers should not undertake the relevant interviews with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, therefore it was proposed that the Chair of Personnel Committee undertakes the performance development interviews (PDI's) and reviews with the Chair and Vice Chair (in conjunction with the Clerk) , and that the Corporate Communications and Member Support Manager and Clerk undertake such interviews with the remaining 23 Members.

The Chair gave her full support for the Authority's intention to apply for the Charter as a means of Members enhancing their wide range of competence and skills brought from previous experiences in order that they could make effective business decisions on behalf of the Authority. Councillor Philpott indicated her intention to be the first Member to undertake the PDI Interview which she was happy to be undertaken in the presence of other Members. Members requested that details pertaining to their previous skills and interests be included within the PDI form in order to provide additional background information.

### **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that Members***

- i) Agree the proposed processes for undertaking Performance Development interviews and reviews***
- ii) Approve the templates for undertaking Performance Development Interviews documents***
- iii) Approve the Member Development Strategy***

**10. TO RECEIVE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Health and Safety Management Performance Report was considered and Members were pleased to note that the end of year figures for the number of injuries to Service employees since the commencement of the new reporting period (1<sup>st</sup> April 2008) remained at a level comparable with the previous year. The majority of injuries reported were the result of slips and trips and manual handling activities. It was noted that accident investigation reports were carefully analysed to ensure that root cause of the injury(s) were identified and that remedial action was commensurate in reducing the risk of a recurrence that may include further training, education, amendments to risk assessments or policies.

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. Detailed statistics of accident trends continued to be collated and disseminated to Line Managers on a monthly basis to assist their work.

***It was RESOLVED that***

***The report be received and noted and the progress made be acknowledged in the continued improvement made by the Corporate Risk Management approach***

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

The latest NJC Circular NJC 09/08 relating to the Employment Tribunal's decision to allow negotiations to take place at National level in an effort to secure a settlement to be reached by September 2008 was received. Committee were aware that this was in relation to the treatment of part-time firefighters on the same basis as full time firefighters for the purposes of pension rights and sick pay.

It was noted that this had been on-going for some considerable time and the Director of Finance provided new Members with further background to the negotiations which included the potential for all Fire and Rescue Services to incur significant additional budget pressure in the settlement of this issue.

**RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***The report be received and noted***

**12. TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THE APT & C PAY AWARDS 2008 – NOTICE OF OFFICIAL INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

Members were aware that Unison had called two strike days for 16 and 17 July 2008 and a report of measures taken thus far within the Service in response to the proposed industrial action was attached for information.

It was noted that further action may be possible and Members would be kept informed of developments

**RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted*

**13. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE STAFF SUGGESTION SCHEME**

Committee were informed that a staff suggestion scheme had been introduced in 2000 and had been managed by the Service Development Officer in the then Quality Improvement Support Team (QIST). The scheme was contained within Section 5 of the Business Management Standing order and had not been revised since 2004.

The scheme had recently been reviewed and proposals were being put forward to resurrect it given the impetus on efficiency savings and improving internal communication.

It was proposed that the staff suggestion scheme be resurrected and that it be updated to give a greater incentive by offering a reward of up to £500 for the best annual suggestion. It was proposed that the prize be announced and awarded at the Annual Medal Ceremony with runners up receiving £150.

**RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*i) The revised Staff Suggestion Scheme be approved*

*ii) The best annual suggestion receive a £500 reward with runners up receiving £150*

**14. TO RECEIVE ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was noted with interest that the Chair of the Authority had received a letter from the FBU concerning their objections against Project Fireguard. Members noted the content of the letter and that they would be updated on further developments.