

**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 PEOPLE
& ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING ON
18th JANUARY 2010**

**COFNODION Y PWYLLGOR DATBLYGU POBL A'R GYFUNDREFN
MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE**

DYDD LLUN, 2 TACHWEDD 2009

MONDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2009

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

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

11.00 – 12.40

70% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: M Williams
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: R Llewellyn

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: A Davies, J Holmes,
P James, WEA Jones, C Philpott

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: E Kirchner, P Llewellyn

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: P Coleman, E Aitken, A Howells,
K Jones, B Bassett

1. PERSONAL MATTERS

None were declared.

2. DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared.

3. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14th SEPTEMBER 2009

The minutes of the People and Organisational Development Committee held on 14th September 2009 were received and approved as a true record.

4 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Consideration was given to the sickness absence figures for the period April – September 2009 and Members were pleased to note that performance across employee categories remained favourable in terms of meeting the organisation's target, with 2.62 shifts lost against a target of 5.8. It was highlighted that in some employee categories, sickness absence was considerably higher than the average; however Members acknowledged that such absences often referred to one individual within a small team of workers which could present a skewed effect on the statistics.

Members were informed that the Service had adopted a holistic approach to managing sickness absence. It was noted that the current projected end of year figure of 5.23 shifts lost represented significant year on year improvements for the Service and placed Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service within the upper quartile of best performing organisation in terms of managing sickness absence, and reflected well in comparison with other public services in general. This could be attributed to robust management of sickness and attendance, with arrangements in place for flexible working and a commitment to corporate health, as per the wider WAG agenda for healthy citizens. A discussion ensued on the challenging targets set for the organisation which could realise year on year improvements through the commitment of all personnel.

The Corporate Head of People & Organisational Development reported that a review had recently taken place on the Service's Policy on Smoking and Health which identified the requirement to re-enforce the organisation's commitment to assist individuals to cease smoking. Members were informed that the Corporate Health Team would shortly be reviewing the organisation's commitment to ensuring that nutritional advice was available to employees as part of the overall aim of improving Health and Wellbeing whether as employees or as part of the wider agenda of healthy citizens.

Reference was made to BMI tests as part of Occupational Health assessments. Concerns were raised that the accuracy of these assessments were limited as it made simplistic assumptions about distribution of muscle and bone mass. The

Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development acknowledged these concerns and assured Members that technical equipment had been purchased which would allow for a measured approach in providing accurate readings.

Members were pleased to note that the cycle to work scheme had proven very successful with many employees benefiting from the initiative.

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development provided Members with an overview of the Service's sickness categorization for ill-health and clarified the methodology for generating statistics in line with the organisation's monitoring and reporting procedures to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).

Committee noted that a large proportion of on duty absence remained linked to back injuries (50.5 days) and the Service continued to provide manual handling training to employees and investigated any injuries reported to the Risk Management Department.

With regard to ill-health retirements within the Service, Members noted that these figures remained comparatively low throughout all employee sectors and illustrated the organisation's commitment to robust management of Health and Safety/Risk Management related issues, together with a commitment to Health and Wellbeing within the workplace.

Committee noted the significant improvements that had been made, year on year, in the area of attendance management and commended all Managers for their robust handling of sickness absence, which had led to the continuing downward trend in the figures.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted.

5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON EMPLOYMENT OF MEMBERS OF POLICE FORCES BY FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITIES

Members were informed that recent advice provided to Fire and Rescue Services throughout the UK confirmed that Special Constables and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were eligible for employment as firefighters. It was noted that Police Community Support Officers were police authority support staff and would be eligible to join the Retained Duty System. This eligibility had been affirmed by the National Policing Improvement Agency in their Special Eligibility Guidance. Members acknowledged that that this entitlement would be subject to local agreement between the Chief Fire Officer and the Chief Constable of the police force concerned.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Members endorse approval being obtained from the Chief Constables of Dyfed-Powys, and South Wales Police Forces in order that the Service may employ Special Constables and Community Support Officers in the future, to aid the Service's Retained Duty System profile where necessary.

6 TO RECEIVE THE SPECIALIST YOUTH TEAM ANNUAL REPORT 2008/2009

DCFO Coleman presented Members with the Specialist Youth Team Annual Report 2008/2009, which outlined the key activities undertaken by the department during its first year of operation.

Members were reminded that the Specialist Youth Team (SYT) was formed in October 2007 using a three year grant funding package from the Welsh Assembly Government. The purpose of the team was to provide expertise, training and support in the field of youth engagement. This service was available to each command within the Service area, as and when required to provide additional specialist support to run children and young people initiatives safely and effectively.

The team, consisting of three personnel, was based in Morriston and delivered a number of specialist courses, particularly the Phoenix, Firefighter4theDay and Skills4Life, primarily in conjunction with Youth Offending Teams and the Hillside Secure Centre in Neath. Members noted that the team had engaged with almost 500 young people during the period covered by the report.

Attention was drawn to the letters and emails expressing thanks from various agencies working in the area of prevention throughout Wales. Members were gratified that the various programmes and courses had been successful.

Members were delighted to note that the team had already been awarded a certificate of recognition by Excellence Wales in 2008, which paid tribute to the commitment of personnel within the department.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted.

7 TO CONSIDER A REPORT ON THE MODEL DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE FOR BRIGADE MANAGERS

Members were informed that the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Local Authority Chief Executives had recently agreed a revised National Salary Framework and Conditions of Service Handbook, and one of the substantive

additions was the revised model disciplinary procedures for Wales and England.

Committee therefore gave consideration to the adoption of a disciplinary procedure for Brigade Managers, which was similar to that applicable to the model adopted by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Officers of Local Authorities, or in cases where the Chief Fire Officer had been designated Head of Paid Service, the JNC for Chief Executives. A copy of the procedures applicable to Wales was attached for Members' attention; it was however highlighted that these were model procedures and the Authority had discretion in how far to follow the guidance. This would allow for the framework to be refined according to the Authority's requirements.

The procedures would allow for a preliminary investigation to be undertaken by a relevant officer or, in allegations concerning the Chief Fire Officer, a designated independent person.

Members were aware that Local Authority Chief Executives were protected under specific regulations that made distinctive provisions, compared to other employees. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (Wales) Regulations 2006 aimed to protect the Chief Executive from unwarranted political interference in their role as Head of Paid Service of the authority. The Clerk emphasised that the distinction between Statutory Officers (Head of Paid Service, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer) compared to other Brigade Managers would need to be embedded within the proposed framework.

Members were reminded that Committee approved the adoption of the JNC Conditions of Service for Chief Executives of Local Authorities covering Capability and Discipline for Brigade Managers within Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service at its meeting on 3rd December 2007.

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development made reference the Welsh Regulations (Regulation 9 (1)), which required that when it appeared that an allegation of misconduct, which may lead to disciplinary action, had been made against the Head of Paid Service (or any Brigade Manager under this Authority's procedures) the Authority must appoint a committee to consider the alleged misconduct. The Clerk noted that this would require the Authority to establish an Investigatory / Disciplinary Committee together with an Appeals Committee.

Following concerns raised by Committee in respect of the establishment of an Appeals Committee, the Clerk assured Members that an appeals procedure would ensure a fair and consistent approach and had a practical purpose in relation to the procedure.

In response to a question raised by Councillor A Davies, Members were reminded that the Fire Authority currently had the discretion to approve or reject a request for resignation from the Chief Fire Officer. Councillor A Davies queried whether the Authority could incorporate a mechanism to prohibit the resignation of a Chief Fire Officer whilst an investigation was ongoing, in order

to ensure equality, fairness and transparency.

The Clerk concluded that officers were mindful of all the valid points raised by Members and that measures needed be formulated to ensure that the appropriate protocols were consistent with the Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service for Brigade Managers and statutory officers.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. A draft discipline protocol be formulated, specific to the requirements of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.*
- 2. A report be submitted to a future committee meeting to incorporate comments made by Members.*

8 TO RECEIVE A REQUEST FOR SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development reminded Members of the policy document in place surrounding the issue of secondary employment, with particular emphasis on the requirement to maintain performance and attendance at work, as a pre-requisite of any approval to engage in work activities outside the Fire Service.

The main aim of the policy was to ensure the maintenance of the professional image of the Fire Service, the health, safety and welfare of employees and compliance with Working Time Regulations.

Following a question from Councillor A Davies, the Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development confirmed that there was scope to alter the terms and conditions for new employees in respect of claiming for injuries incurred within their secondary employment if this was deemed appropriate by Committee.

Consideration was given to a request that had been received from an employee wishing to engage in Secondary Employment, as outlined in the Grey Book Conditions of Service as follows:

<i>Initials</i>	<i>Command / Department</i>	<i>Secondary Employment</i>
S R J	Carmarthenshire County Command	Warehouse Work

Following a vote by show of hands, with one abstention, it was agreed to sanction the request. Members affirmed that additional employee information should be provided to Committee to consider future requests.

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development recommended that Committee be provided with a full list of employees currently engaging in secondary employment, together with their attendance records in order to provide Members with reassurance that the policy was robust.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. The request for secondary employment be approved.*
- 2. Additional employee information be provided to committee when considering future requests*
- 3. Committee be provided with a full list of employees currently engaging in secondary employment, together with their attendance records*

9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

Members were reminded that data was previously requested by the Committee in connection with the breakdown of reported disciplinary cases within the Service during the periods 2008 to 2009 and 2009 to 2010, in order to provide clarity on the number of cases within each employment sector, the nature of such cases, and outcomes in terms of disciplinary award.

Consideration was given to a report outlining background information regarding the Service's disciplinary processes, and the data set for the requested period.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be noted.

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

It was reported that the Service was dedicated to mainstreaming equality and diversity throughout the organisation. In order to demonstrate this commitment an update report was provided for Members' attention to outline the developments made in this field in recent months.

Members were pleased to note that developments had been made in terms of equality and diversity training, top level representation at internal meetings, equality impact assessments, national initiatives and partnerships/ community activities. Reference was made to the equality and diversity training provided to

the Fire Authority on 26th October 2009, whereby Members extended their appreciation for receiving an interesting and beneficial development exercise.

In relation to recruitment, the Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development reported that the Service would continue to raise awareness within communities of the role of a firefighter with the aim of recruiting a workforce that was representative of the community.

Councillor C Philpott reminded Members of the recruitment procedure, which was a fair and transparent process that recruited personnel based on merit. It was further noted that the most recent recruits, employed in June 2009, represented a cross section of society.

Following a question from Councillor A Davies, Members were informed that the Service was investigating a possible Graduate Entry Scheme along with North and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services. The scheme was intended to open the Service to a wider spectrum of applicants, speed progression and improve diversity. It would also help representation in terms of ethnicity, gender, academic qualifications, work experience and other background issues.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be noted.

11 TO RECEIVE THE CORPORATE RISK DEPARTMENT REPORT – HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented Members with a periodic overview of Health and Safety management performance within the Service. Attention was drawn to the number of on-duty injuries, whereby a total of 39 injuries had been reported compared with 45 reported injuries within the same reporting period last year. Members were very pleased to note the 13% reduction in total injuries to date.

Upon scrutiny, the most reported cause of On Duty injury during the period to date was Exposure to Noise (7 events), closely followed by handling, lifting and carrying (6 events), Hit by Moving / Flying object (6 events) and Slips, Trips and Falls (6 events).

With regard to the Exposure to Noise events, these had been primarily in Service Control and had involved reports of 'feedback' through operator headsets. These events had been carefully scrutinised by the Service and in all reported cases to date, the noise had been one of 'discomfort' as opposed to causing a 'temporary threshold shift' or 'physical injury' to the operator's ear. Members acknowledged that investigations into the cause of the irregular noise events were continuing.

Councillor R Llewellyn made reference to the Chief Fire Officers Association Health & Safety Seminar attended on 7th and 8th October 2009. He reported that the event had been extremely successful and he was gratified to represent the Authority in his capacity of Health and Safety Champion. Furthermore, Councillor Llewellyn recorded his thanks for the support and guidance provided to him by Officers.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. Members acknowledge the progress being made to continuously improve the management of health, safety and welfare within the Service.*
- 2. The report be received with the following revisions:*
 - a) Remove the term 'normally' from section 2, paragraph 2*
 - b) Amend section 3, paragraph 1 to reflect that the outcome report relating to the Operational Assessment process is soon to be published.*