

**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, 19 MEDI 2005
MONDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2005**

***YSTAFELL TEIFI,
CANOLFAN HALLIWELL, COLEG Y DRINDOD,
CAERFYRDDIN***

***THE TEIFI SUITE, HALLIWELL CENTRE
TRINITY COLLEGE
CARMARTHEN***

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: Mrs C Philpott

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: D R James

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: C J Crowley, B J Hall,
P James, M Williams

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: Mrs P Llewellyn,
Mrs F M Jones, Miss C Waller,

1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared

2 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20th JUNE 2005

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2005 were received and approved.

3 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AND ILL-HEALTH

Consideration was given to figures relating to sickness absence for the period April to July 2005 together with details of the profile of ill-health retirements within the Service for the first six months of the financial year.

In regard to sickness absence statistics for the current year, it was noted that the overall average to date for the current year of 2.98 shifts lost equated to an annual figure of 8.94 shifts lost. Whilst significant improvements had been made in sickness attendance figures since the last report to Members in June 2005, further work was required to realise improvements if the Service was to meet its target of 7 shifts lost as an overall average. Early referrals, temporary adjustments to working patterns, restricted duties, counselling services etc, were all measures available to line managers, with reductions in salary and disciplinary action being seen as the "last resort". The Head of Human Resources continued to work with Heads of Departments in providing advice and guidance within the Authority's Policies, and Conditions of Service, and a further report to Members in December 2005 would detail the measures taken during the year in terms of managing attendance within the workplace. It was noted that the sickness figures of Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service compared favourably to those of North and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

The latest available figures for ill-health retirements across all sectors were noted. The number of ill-health retirements for the accounting period were all within the Firefighter's Pension Scheme and continued to be relatively low compared to the historical background pre-reorganisation. However, it was noted that the Service was currently dealing with a number of ill-health related cases, of a long-term nature, which could impact further on those statistics over the next few months. Additionally, the constraint of the Firefighter's Pension Scheme arrangements continued to place difficulties on the managerial actions available to officers dealing with individual cases.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report on attendance and ill-health be received and noted

4 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE 2005 RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

With reference to discussion at the last meeting, Members were aware that the

Service had recently embarked upon a Wholetime Recruitment Campaign in conjunction with both North Wales and South Wales Fire and Rescue Services. A Recruitment Hotline Number would be open between the 12-27 September 2005 which was administered by a recruitment agency commissioned by the three fire services. It was further noted that 3,000 individuals who had been held on the Service's database of those who had "expressed an interest" in becoming firefighters had been notified of the campaign.

The initial sifting of applications would take place during early October 2005, again on an All-Wales basis, and once this had been completed, each Fire Service would administer the Point of Entry Selection Tests (POEST) with a view to selecting recruits for employment in 2006.

Service Officers had attended a large Jobs Fayre at the Brangwyn Hall, Swansea on the 14 September 2005 and targeted awareness events had been held in areas where take up had been historically low, in an effort to increase the number of applications. A project plan of the recruitment tests to be held during the Autumn period and was attached and noted for information purposes.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

Members were aware that at the last Personnel Committee meeting it had been resolved that a letter was to be sent to all relevant employees reminding them of the requirement to declare any secondary employment within the terms of the Fire Authority's Policy. This letter had been sent to all relevant staff on 30th June 2005 with a further reminder letter sent on 15th August 2005

It was reported that a total of 485 letters had been issued with 247 responses being returned. From these 247 returns, 48 were new applications from employees who had not previously declared any engagement in secondary employment activities. A further 3 employees had changed the nature of their secondary employment and were therefore requesting amendments to the details previously submitted. The Service had already recorded 44 Secondary Employment requests, which had been previously agreed by Committee. Discussions were currently taking place with the County Commanders regarding the Secondary Employment applications received as a result of this exercise, and these applications would be presented for consideration at the next Personnel Committee meeting when a more detailed report would be produced for members.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted and would be discussed further at the December meeting when further information would be available from the County Commanders.

6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE DISABILITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Committee were informed that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 had brought in measures to prevent discrimination against disabled people. Part 2 of the Act had been based on the principle that disabled people should not be discriminated against in employment or when seeking employment.

It was noted that from 1 October 2004 Fire and Rescue Services had to comply with the duties set out in Part 2 of the Act.

This policy was based on the Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice and the Draft Joint Guidance issued by the Chief Fire Officers Association and the Disability Rights Commission.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report on the Disability Policy and Procedures be received and noted

7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE JOB EVALUATION/PAY REVIEW

Members were aware of the requirements for public authorities to conduct a Job Evaluation/Pay Review by no later than March 2007, as outlined in NJC Circular 4/04. It had been originally planned to commence this process during the early part of 2005, but this had not been possible owing to the pressures placed upon the Service in dealing with the on-going issues connected with the Pay and Modernisation Agenda. However, consultations had now taken place with officers at Carmarthenshire County Council, who were in a position to assist the Service in administering the Job Evaluation process during late 2005 and early 2006. The management of the Scheme, however, remained within the remit of Fire Service Officers, with the purchase of staff/time and resources being provided by a local constituent authority. At this stage, it was intended that the Service would use the Greater London Job Evaluation Scheme, adopted by the majority of local unitary authorities, and an outline project plan had been drawn-up detailing how the process would roll progress during the coming months. Members noted that Carmarthenshire County Council had indicated that the overall costs of administering the Job Evaluation/Pay Review would be in the region of £15,000. As a consequence of the implementation of the Job Evaluation process, a further sum of £60,000 will be needed to be included in the 2006-7 budget allocation for APT&C employee salaries, and this would form part of the forthcoming budgetary discussions with the unitary authorities during late 2005 and early 2006.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report on the Job Evaluation and Pay Review be received and approved

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE

Consideration was given to the Health and Safety Performance Report which provided Members with an overview of the work which had been carried out within that Department over the past months in order to improve the management of health, safety and welfare of employees within the Service.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted

9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CHILDCARE VOUCHER SCHEME

A report was received for information on a recently introduced Government scheme which offered tax relief to employees who wished to use workplace vouchers to pay for childcare costs

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be received for information

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME

A report was received which outlined the progress made by the Authority in the implementation of its Welsh Language scheme, which, on approval, would be submitted to the Welsh Language Board.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and approved