

**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, 6 MAWRTH 2006

MONDAY, 6 MARCH 2006

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

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

PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: Mrs C Philpott

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:

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

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: D R James

1 PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chairman informed the meeting of Councillor Ray James' recent illness and hospitalisation. Members were delighted to learn that Councillor James had now returned home and resolved to convey their good wishes to him for a speedy recovery.

Members conveyed their deepest sympathy to Councillor Crowley whose nephew had recently died suddenly.

2 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared

Item 13. An interest in this item was declared by the DCFO, Corporate Head of Corporate Policy and Member Support and Corporate Head of Human Resources.

3 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2005

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2005 were received and approved.

Item 7 : Networking Women in the Fire Service Conference

The Chair stated that as the Welsh Assembly Government and the three Welsh Fire and Rescue Services were sponsoring the above forthcoming event a number of free places would be made available to Members. Once the exact number of places had been confirmed, Members would be advised accordingly.

4 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE 2005 WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

The Corporate Head of Human Resources presented the report and outlined the process undertaken and the challenges faced by the three Fire and Rescue Services as they embarked on the campaign.

A number of questions were raised by Members about the Point of Entry tests and it was agreed that a presentation be made at a future meeting of the Personnel Committee on the tests.

The Chair congratulated the Corporate Head of Human Resources and his team for finalising the recruitment process within a tight timetable.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received for information

5 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AND ILL-HEALTH

The Corporate Head of Human Resources presented the report on attendance and ill-health which reflected disappointing figures. It was unlikely that the target for 2005 -6 would now be met.

In response to queries from Members emerging trends in sickness absence had been identified and initiatives adopted by other authorities in managing sickness were currently being considered for possible implementation so as to improve attendance.

It was agreed that long term sickness statistics be presented separately at the next meeting of the Personnel Committee and that Members of the Performance and Policy Review Committee be invited to attend the next meeting of the Personnel Committee when a presentation would be made on the management of sickness absence.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report on the current sickness absence statistics and ill-health retirement figures be received and noted and that Members of the Performance and Policy Review Committee be invited to the next meeting of the Personnel Committee when a presentation would be made on sickness management policies.

6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEME

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report on the Firefighters pension Scheme from which it was noted that from the 6 April 2006, it was intended that the current Firefighters' Pension Scheme would be closed to new members. It was proposed that this would be replaced by the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme, which would be open to regular, retained duty system and volunteer firefighters. Members of the current scheme would be able to opt to join the new scheme if it was the individual's preference.

A framework for the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme was attached to the report for information, however it was noted that due to the recent agreement to withdraw the proposal to raise the retirement age, members' contributions would be increased to 8.5% of pensionable pay.

Upon introduction of the new scheme, a number of amendments would be made to the current scheme including:

- Relaxing the rules on tax relief on all pension contributions (currently limited to 15% of earnings)
- Introduction of a lifetime allowance for tax-privileged savings – this would be £1.5 million in the tax year 2006/7, rising each year to £1.8 million in tax year

2010/11

- Amendments which introduced pensions for civil partners
- Amendments to the ill-health benefits to bring them into line with proposals for the new scheme.

As Ministers had agreed to withdraw the proposals to raise the minimum pension age to 55 years in 2013, as a consequence the minimum pension age would remain at age 50. Pensions would continue to be paid to a regular firefighter who had attained age 50 and was entitled to reckon at least 25 years' Pensionable Service.

This decision would have an impact on the future cost of the Firefighter Pension scheme and in consequence, the employee contribution rate for members of the New Firefighters' Pension scheme would be slightly greater than originally envisaged, at 8.5% of Pensionable Pay.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The update on amendments to the Firefighters Pension Scheme be received and noted.

7 TO CONSIDER AN UPDATE ON THE JOB EVALUATION/PAY REVIEW

Committee were reminded that the Service was undertaking a Job Evaluation / Pay Review for Local Government Services employees in line with NJC Circular 04/04 and that reviews were to be completed by March 2007 at the latest. The process of evaluating posts was well underway, with the Job Evaluation Analyst Team at Carmarthenshire County Council, working in partnership with the Service, having scored the majority of posts over the past few weeks. A Moderation Panel, made up of representatives from staff groups and trade unions within the Service was due to meet shortly, and pay modelling etc will then take place as soon as possible.

Members recalled that a sum of £60,000 had been assigned to the support staff salary budget to cater for the job evaluation process, and every effort will be made to work within this cost envelope.

The issue of Appeals against decisions of any future salary gradings emanating from this process would be considered by a panel consisting of the DCFO, Corporate Head of Human Resources and a senior member of the Job Analyst Team.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The progress on the Job Evaluation process to date be noted and Committee be informed of the final results in due course

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

Consideration was given to a number of requests which had been received from employees applying for permission to engage in Secondary Employment. It was agreed that wholetime firefighters be reminded on an annual basis of the need to seek appropriate authorisation if they wished to undertake secondary employment and that the policy on secondary employment be amended so that permission to engage in secondary employment be linked to a good attendance record.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The requests for Secondary Employment be approved.

9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON CHILD AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This document had been produced with the assistance of the NSPCC for introduction into the Service. The document set out policy and procedures on child protection, with associated general guidance for personnel. It established the roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to the protection of children with whom they come into contact through their work.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The policy and procedures be received and noted

10 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 in order to improve the management of health, safety and welfare of employees within the Service.

The Chair requested that the congratulations of the Personnel Committee be conveyed to Mydrian Harries and his team for the good work undertaken.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted

11 To resolve, that pursuant to Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the reason, that if they

were present, it is likely that there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information within the description of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to current employees of the Service.

12 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON PRINCIPAL OFFICERS PAY

Members had approved the recommendation contained within the NJC Circular to review pay levels for Principal Officers at the December meeting of the Personnel Committee.

It was reported that external consultants had been commissioned to undertake this work, with job evaluation reviews taking place within the next few weeks. It had been considered appropriate at this stage to include the roles of Corporate Head of Policy and Member Support, and the Corporate Head of Human Resources within this process as the pay scale for these posts falls outside the Local Government Pay Scales, and should be subject to review in the spirit and guidance offered by the National employers.

It was envisaged that the entire process would be completed within the next month or so and the outcome would be presented to Committee at the next meeting.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The actions already undertaken regarding the review of Principal Officers pay be approved and a further report be presented once the review had been completed