

**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 MEHEFIN 2006

MONDAY, 19 JUNE 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: D R James

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: C J Crowley, B J Hall,
K Harris, F M Jones, M Williams

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: P James, P Llewellyn

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: Cyng/Cllrs: JJJ Davies, C Morgan,
D C Prothero, P Spender

1 PERSONAL MATTERS

Members were delighted to congratulate Head of Community Safety, John FitzJohn, who had been awarded the MBE in The Queen's Birthday Honours List. Mr FitzJohn had been honoured for his outstanding work in Vehicle Arson Reduction in the Swansea Bay area.

2 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS

None were declared

The following Officers declared an interest:

Item 7 - An interest in this item was declared by the DCFO and ACO

Item 15 - An interest in this item was declared by the DCFO, ACO, Director of Finance and the Corporate Head of Human Resources.

3 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2006 were received and approved.

4 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON THE SERVICE'S ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

At the last meeting of the Personnel Committee, Members had asked that a presentation be made at the next meeting on the Service's Policies and Procedures relating to sickness absence and attendance management and that Members of the Performance and Policy Review Committee be invited to attend. The Corporate Head of Human Resources presented a detailed report which gave an overview of the Service's Sickness Absence Policy through to the tools available to Managers to assist them in managing sickness absence within their own department. It was emphasised that all Managers were ultimately responsible for the attendance of colleagues under the Service's new Performance Management Framework.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The presentation 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 for both 2005/06 and the current year.

For 2005/06 the average number of shifts lost was 9.22 compared with 7.75 the previous year which was a disappointing outcome. However it was noted that some improvement had been realised within the final quarter of the accounting year.

With regard to this year's sickness absence figures, the shifts lost average for the first two months of the accounting period was running at 1, with the projected overall average, based on current performance, indicating an end of year figure of 6.

Whilst it remained early to make any firm prediction for this year, Members noted that the Service's Performance Management Framework contained targets for each individual department in terms of sickness absence, which was designed to devolve ownership of attendance management to local managers even further.

In considering the ill-health retirement figures it was noted that these figures remained comparatively low and represented significant year on year improvements.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report on the current sickness absence statistics and ill-health retirement figures be received and noted.

6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

Members had requested the production of a robust Policy document 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 (and ongoing support) to engage in work activities outside the Fire Service.

Following consideration and debate, Members approved the document apart from agreeing that the Appeals Panel should be made up of Authority Members who were not Members of the Personnel Committee and had taken part in the original decision making process.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The Secondary Employment Policy be approved for introduction within the Service. A note be made that the Appeals Panel be made up of Authority Members who do not sit on the Personnel Committee

7 TO CONSIDER AN UPDATE ON THE FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEME

Further to a report to Committee on 6 March 2006, a number of circulars had been received from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Welsh Assembly Government, regarding amendments to the existing Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the introduction of a New Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

The DCLG was currently conducting a series of workshops to advise Fire and

Rescue Service's of the changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, and representation was made by this Service at the recent event in London. Although it was not made clear during the workshop when the new scheme would come into force, it was suggested that the scheme would be in place by the end of the summer in England, and that the draft Order would be available on the DCLG website during June 2006.

It was also stated that a comprehensive options exercise would be undertaken during the period October 2006 to December 2006, when a statement pack would be issued to members of the existing scheme and retained duty firefighters who wished to join the new scheme.

In relation to the transfer of existing members, the DCLG was trying to secure an agreement with the Government Actuary Department, in so far as members who opt to transfer to the new scheme during the options exercise will receive greater incentives than those who opted to transfer at a later date under normal club transfer rules.

Members noted that at a Fire and Rescue Services Pension Practitioners' meeting with WAG on 22 May 2006, it was confirmed that the Firefighters' Pension Scheme arrangements would not be enacted in Wales at the same time as England, due to the requirement for WAG to prepare the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Wales) Order. Further information regarding the timing of the new scheme being enacted in Wales would be provided to Members following the next meeting of the Pension Practitioners, although it was expected that the process in Wales would be 2-3 months behind introduction by DCLG in England. The Order, when issued, would have retrospective effect to 6 April 2006. The new tax regime for pensions, which came into effect on 06 April 2006, relaxed the rules limiting opportunities for a person to draw pension and continue in employment.

Of particular note was that subject to the rules on minimum pension age and normal pension age, as outlined in the pension scheme rules, being satisfied, a firefighter could now retire and draw pension and any lump sum, and be re-employed by the Service. Provision had been made within the scheme for the abatement of a pension payable under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme for any period during which the pensioner was employed as a regular firefighter with a Fire and Rescue Service. The Fire and Rescue Service responsible for paying the pension had, therefore, the discretion to withdraw the whole or part of the pension, as the principle that the annual rate of pay as a firefighter following re-employment, plus the annual rate of pension should not exceed the annual rate as a firefighter received immediately prior to retirement.

Re-employment was at the discretion of the employing Service, and retirement would constitute a break in service so that membership of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme would be terminated. On re-employment, however, the firefighters could be eligible to join the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme, provided the person met the membership criteria.

In light of the above, and in anticipation of an increase in enquiries from existing Firefighters' Pension Scheme Members, the Service had produced a policy document on this matter which was submitted for Members' consideration and approval.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The amendments to the existing scheme and introduction of the new scheme be noted for information and that the proposed policy on re-employment of firefighters following retirement be approved

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WELSH CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

In March 2005, Members received a report on the first Member Development Conference hosted by the WLGA in Cardiff. The purpose of the conference was partly to review and explore the changing roles of Elected Members and to review and inform the Member Development Strategy for Wales which was being developed by the WLGA with the full involvement and support of its Membership. A key component of the strategy was the development of a new Member Charter. The high level aims of the Charter were to ensure that local authorities were served by effective elected members working to assure/improve corporate governance, local democracy and local services. The Charter was formally launched at the WLGA conference last September in 2005 and authorities were able to commit formally to the principles in the charter by signing the statement of intent to apply and undertake a self assessment. The charter has been developed collaboratively by member support officers from each Authority and members representing each of the political groups with the WLGA. There are three levels of achievement within the award, namely, the Charter, Advanced Charter and Excellence Award. In applying for each individual level each Authority must satisfy a peer review team in respect of arrangements within the following areas: modernised constitutional arrangements; member personal role, skill and knowledge development; members support services and members facilities.

Further to consideration of the report in 2005, Members of the Personnel Committee requested that the Charter would not require single purpose authorities, such as this Authority, to duplicate services and training provided by constituent authorities. Work has now commenced on an all-Wales basis with the WLGA and two other Fire and Rescue Services to prepare an amended Charter specifically for the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales. It is proposed that the draft amended charter will be available for Members' consideration at the next meeting of the Personnel Committee along with draft role descriptions for office holders.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be noted for information

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY PERFORMANCE

Members received 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.

Of particular note was that the Service had been working closely with the HSE in providing information towards a 'Case Study' report for their annual reviews and Members were pleased to note that the Service had been formally recognised by the HSE for its 'Effective Health & Safety Directorship Leadership Duties' which was made public at the Institute of Directors Annual Conference held at the Royal Albert Hall, London on the 26th April 2006. Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service were the first Fire & Rescue Service to be featured by the HSE in their case studies.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The report be received and noted and Members wished their congratulations to be passed on to the Service Risk Manager