

**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**MINUTES OF THE HR & EQUALITIES MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY, 27 FEBRUARY, 2023**

**HELD IN MEETING ROOM 8 OR REMOTELY VIA TEAMS**

**15. PRESENT:**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Left</b>	<b>Authority</b>
A Roberts (Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
D Ali (Deputy Chair)		Cardiff
A Best		Torfaen
K Carr		Cardiff
P Ford		Bridgend
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
A Hussey		Caerphilly
S McConnel		Monmouthshire
D Naughton		Cardiff
T Watkins		Newport

**APOLOGIES:**

C Elsbury	Caerphilly
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**ABSENT:**

S Melbourne	Cardiff
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**OFFICERS PRESENT:-** ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, T/ACFO G Davies – Director of Technical Services, Mr A Jones – Head of HR, Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer & Head of Corporate Support

**16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

## **17. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Following the devastating earthquake in Turkey, the Chair took the opportunity to thank the three operational members of the Service who had been deployed to assist the International Search & Rescue Team.

T/ACFO Garry Davies confirmed that members of the operational team would attend the Fire Authority meeting in March to provide Members with a full report.

## **18. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous HR & Equalities meeting held on 7 November, 2022, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings, subject to the following amendment:-

- Councillor K Carr is a Member of Cardiff (not Torfaen)
- Councillor D Naughton is a Member of Cardiff (not Caerphilly)

## **19. REPORTS FOR DECISION**

### **19.1. ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024**

The ACO People Services informed Members that South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority was required to publish a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year, which provided information for the following financial year.

The Fire & Rescue Authority at their meeting held on 6 February, 2012, adopted and published its first Pay Policy Statement. The Fire & Rescue Authority also determined that the HR & Equalities Committee should review the Pay Policy Statement and report to the full Committee. In 2014 Welsh Government issued new guidelines with further amendments which determined the contents of the Pay Policy. The 2023/2024 Pay Policy Statement had been drafted for Members.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 19.1.1 Members agreed to review South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024.

- 19.1.2 Members agreed to approve the 2023/2024 Pay Policy Statement to be published by 31 March 2023.

## **19.2 GENDER PAY GAP STATEMENT REPORT**

The ACO People Services advised Members that under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (the public sector regulations), all public authorities were required to publish Gender Pay Gap information by reporting the percentage differences in pay between their male and female employees.

Public authorities must publish the required information based on data captured on the snapshot date of 31 March, within 12 months. Accordingly the deadline for publication was 30 March, 2023.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 19.2.1 Following a question and answer session on the recruitment of more female firefighters into the Service, Members agreed to approve the 2022 Gender Pay Gap attached to the report at Appendix 1, to be published by 30 March, 2023.
- 19.2.2. Members agreed to note the further analysis provided, attached to the report at Appendix 2.

## **19.3 PROPOSED INCREASED SALARY INCREMENTS FOR ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS**

The T/ACFO Technical Services informed Members that to assist in the retention of On-Call firefighters who were in the development stage of their careers, by financial incentives. This would be achieved by decreasing the timescales for pay increase of On-Call staff following their initial training course. Pay rises would be linked to the completion of essential core skills modules as illustrated within the report.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

Following a question and answer session, Members agreed that On-Call firefighters would be funded in line with the recommendations contained within the report.

## **20. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**

### **20.1 REPORT ON PEOPLE PLAN 2021-2024 & ALL WALES POD STRATEGY**

The ACO People Services presented a report which invited Members to review the progress against activity set out in the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service (SWFRS) People Plan. Members would also be aware of the All Wales People & Organisational Development Strategy which dovetailed to the proposals in the SWFRS Plan. [https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/10/All-Wales-People-and-Organisational-Development-Strategy-2021-2024\\_en\\_final.pdf](https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/10/All-Wales-People-and-Organisational-Development-Strategy-2021-2024_en_final.pdf)

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

- 20.1.1 Members agreed to note the All Wales People & Organisational Development Strategy.
- 20.1.2 Members agreed to note the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service People Plan attached to the report at Appendix 1.
- 20.1.3 Members agreed to note the progress against the SWFRS Plan attached to the report at Appendix 2.

### **20.2 FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEMES – WALES GOVERNMENT CIRCULARS 2022/2023**

The ACO People Services informed Members that under the terms of the Public Services Pension Act 2013, the Fire & Rescue Authority was the recognised Scheme Manager for Firefighters Pension Schemes.

Welsh Government issued regular communications to all Chief Fire Officers, Chairs, and Clerks of Fire & Rescue Authorities, electronically in a standard circular template. These e-mails and circulars could cover a variety of areas, including all aspects of Firefighters Pension Schemes, and would be noted or actioned as appropriate.

20.2.1 Members agreed to accept the Welsh Government Firefighters' Pension Scheme Circulars and e-mails that had been received in the year 2022/2023.

20.2.2 Members agreed to note the actions that had been implemented for each of the circulars.

### **20.3 WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS UPDATE – JANUARY 2023**

The Head of HR presented a report which provided Members with an overview of the current position with regards to meeting the legal requirements contained within the Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice issued to the Fire & Rescue Authority by the Welsh Language Commissioner on 30 September, 2016.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

20.3.1 Members agreed to note the information contained within the report.

20.3.2 Officers agreed to email Members with the exact figures on the number of employees who had Welsh Language skills.

### **20.4 REVIEW OF SERVICE RESPONSE TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

The Head of HR presented a report which provided Members with a brief overview of the Socio-Economic Duty and how it related to the Service. The report also highlighted what activities had been achieved by various departments within the Service over the previous year.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

20.4.1 Following a question and answer session, Members agreed to note the content of the report.

20.4.2 Members agreed to note that future reporting on the Socio-Economic Duty would now be included in the

Service's Strategic Equality Plan review on an annual basis as opposed to a standalone agenda item.

## **20.5 ESTABLISHMENT STRUCTURE UPDATE**

The Head of HR presented a report which provided Members with an overview of the current position in respect of any permanent changes to the Service's staffing structure. This followed the agreement at the Fire & Rescue Authority meeting in September 2018 to approve the establishment restructure in order to meet future challenges and demands.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to note the information contained within the report.

## **20.6 JOB EVALUATION PROCESS**

The Head of HR presented a report which provided Members with the outcomes of the Service's Job Evaluation process which commenced in 2020 and concluded early 2022 due to the delay experienced during Covid. The report contained details of the number of posts affected and subsequent impacts.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to note the implementation and completion of the Job Evaluation exercise as outlined within the report.

## **20.7 ANNUAL SUMMARY OF HR & TRAINING REPORTS 2022/2023**

The ACO People Services presented a report which informed Members of the work that the HR & Equalities Committee had undertaken during the Municipal Year 2022/2023.

### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to note the work of the HR & Equalities Committee.

**21. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023**

The ACO People Services provided Members with the Forward Work Programme for 2022/2023.

**RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2022/2023.

**22. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRPERSON DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 or 2)**

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.