

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 19 JULY 2021 AT 1030 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 8 OR REMOTELY VIA STARLEAF

12. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
D T Davies (Chair)		Caerphilly
S Bradwick (Deputy Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
D Ali		Cardiff
L Brown		Monmouthshire
M Colbran		Merthyr Tydfil
P Drake		Vale of Glamorgan
S Evans		Torfaen
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
A Hussey		Caerphilly
H Jarvie		Vale of Glamorgan
S Malson		Torfaen
S Morgans		Rhondda Cynon Taff
D Naughton		Cardiff
A Roberts		Rhondda Cynon Taff
R Shaw		Bridgend
V Smith		Monmouthshire
M Spencer		Newport
D White		Bridgend
J Williams		Cardiff

APOLOGIES:

C Elsbury	Caerphilly
H Thomas	Newport
S Chapman	Monitoring Officer

ABSENT:

S Ebrahim	Cardiff
W Hodgins	Blaenau Gwent
A Lister	Cardiff

OFFICERS PRESENT:- CFO H Jakeway, ACFO D Rose – Director of Service Delivery, ACFO R Prendergast – Director of Technical Services, ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, ACO G Thomas – Temporary Director of Corporate Services, Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer, Mr A Jones – Head of HR, Mr Steve Frank – Wales Audit Officer

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Mr Steve Frank, Wales Audit Officer, who was attending the meeting as an observer.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

14. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **PASSING OF FIREFIGHTER STUART GRIFFITHS**

The Chair was extremely sad to announce the passing of Firefighter Stuart Griffiths, who since 2002 had served at many stations across South Wales.

The Chair stated that Firefighter Griffiths was a truly dedicated and professional firefighter, and as a mark of respect Members held a minute's silence.

- **DEPUTY MINISTER**

The Chair informed Members that following the Welsh Government elections and Cabinet Portfolio announcements, he was pleased to announce that Hannah Blythyn had maintained the role of Deputy Minister. Members noted that the Chair had met with the Deputy Minister and the three Welsh Chief Fire Officers on 7 July, 2021.

The Chief Fire Officer took the opportunity to provide Members with a brief overview of the key elements discussed in the meeting, and also highlighted that the Deputy Minister intended to visit each of the three Welsh Fire & Rescue Services in due course.

- **COVID ASSISTANCE TO THE WELSH AMBULANCE SERVICE**

The Chair informed Members that the Chief Fire Officer had recently been notified that Covid assistance to the Welsh Ambulance Service had now concluded, and a certificate of appreciation had been received. He was pleased to announce that through dedicated volunteers the Service had provided 535 additional shifts to ambulance colleagues, and 458 shifts to community vaccination centres.

- **PAY INCREASE**

The Chair informed Members that following ongoing pay discussions for all groups of Service staff, respective representative bodies had finally reached an agreement with the employers. He was pleased to announce that Grey and Gold Book employees had accepted a pay increase of 1.5%.

Members noted that whilst the same offer had been made to Green Book employees, discussions and negotiations were still ongoing.

For the benefit of new Members, the Chief Fire Officer provided a brief explanation on the colour coding of the different book structures.

15. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The following minutes were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings:-

- Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on 22 March 2021
- Fire & Rescue Authority Annual General Meeting held on 14 June 2021
- Local Pension Board Committee meeting held on 25 January 2021
- HR & Equalities Committee meeting held on 22 February 2021

With reference to attendance at the Local Pension Board Committee meeting, the Deputy Chair wished to record his disappointment that two members of the Fire Brigades Union had not attended the last meeting or even submitted their apologies.

16. UPDATE ON ACTIONS

The ACO Corporate Services provided a brief overview and update on each of the following outstanding actions, which included minute numbers:- 20/21-32, 20/21-56.6, and 20/21-56.10.

17. REPORTS FOR DECISION

17.1. REPORT ON THE PRE-CONSULTATION OF OUR PLANS FOR 2022/23 (STRATEGIC THEMES AND PROPOSED OBJECTIVES 2022/2023)

The Head of Corporate Support presented a report for Members to approve the proposed objectives for 2022/2023 to deliver the long term Strategic Themes for publication in the Service's Annual Improvement Plan Stage 2 for formal consultation.

RESOLVED THAT

17.1.1 Members unanimously agreed to approve the proposed objectives for engagement events, and publication in the 'Consultation Document', Stage 2 of the Annual Improvement Plan on the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service's internet site by 31 October, 2021.

17.1.2 Members unanimously agreed to approve delegation to the Director of Corporate Services and Head of Corporate Support to review and refine the proposed objectives as necessary for the public consultation.

17.2. OUTCOME AND IMPLEMENTATION OF JOB EVALUATION

The ACO People Services, and Head of HR, presented a report to Members which set out the outcomes of a Job Evaluation exercise and sought agreement from the Fire & Rescue Authority to implement these outcomes. It contained details of the number of

posts affected, alongside details of the cost implications associated with implementation.

With reference to operational personnel, the Chief Fire Officer assured Members that the Job Evaluation exercise only related to corporate administrative staff and not operational firefighters.

RESOLVED THAT

- 17.2.1 Following lengthy debate and a question and answer session, Members unanimously agreed to the implementation of the outcomes of the Job Evaluation exercise as outlined within the report.
- 17.2.2 Officers agreed to provide Councillor Jarvie with further clarification on the input provided by the external specialists who assisted in assessing the Job Evaluation process.

The Head of HR also took the opportunity to thank members of the Project Board and all staff for their hard work and co-operation throughout the whole Job Evaluation process.

Members also wished to record their thanks and appreciation to Officers and staff for carrying out the Job Evaluation exercise on behalf of the Service.

17.3 FIREFIGHTER PENSIONS – REMEDYING AGE DISCRIMINATION

The ACO People Services presented a report which provided Members with information on the current position on firefighter pensions. This followed a successful legal challenge from the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in 2018 on the grounds of age discrimination, and subsequent decisions, and informal guidance in relation to remedying the discrimination and the implementation of further reform from 2022. In light of the information provided in the report, and as the Scheme Manager, the Fire & Rescue Authority was asked to make a decision on the next steps.

RESOLVED THAT

- 17.3.1 Following a question and answer session on legal implications, Members unanimously agreed to note the contents of the report.
- 17.3.2 Members unanimously agreed to provide pension benefit options for those individuals who were considered to be in scope for Immediate Detriment. This would apply to individuals who provided three month' notice of their retirement from the present day, and were either 'Unprotected' or 'Tapered' members of the legacy schemes, and did not fall within the excluded categories identified within the Home Office and Local Government Association guidance issued on 10 June, 2021.
- 17.3.3 Members unanimously agreed that the Service would take forward the exercise to implement the wider remedy work as described in the outcome of the HMT consultation on public service pensions (Feb 2021), commonly known as the McCloud exercise. This would be implemented by October 2023 at the latest.

18. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

18.1 CARBON REDUCTION AND BIODIVERSITY PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE

The ACO Corporate Services informed Members that the presented report set out the progress made in the first year of the Carbon Reduction Plan (CRP) 2020-2023, and the Biodiversity Forward Plan (BFP), and also looked ahead to the second year of planned activities.

RESOLVED THAT

Following discussion on the flexibility of working from home, and a question and answer session, Members agreed to note the Year 1 progress of the Carbon Reduction and Biodiversity Plan.

18.2 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER REPORT

The ACO Corporate Services presented Members with a report on the Strategic Risk Register.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the information contained within the Strategic Risk Register report.

18.3. END OF YEAR HEALTH CHECK ON PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2020/21 QUARTER 4

The ACO Corporate Services presented to Members a report on the end of year Health Check on Performance, and the ACFO Service Delivery provided an update on the Strategic Objectives 2020/21 Quarter 4.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a question and answer session on issues relating to refuse fires and fly tipping within some Unitary Authority areas, as well as the importance of linking in with partner agencies in order to connect with vulnerable people, Members agreed to note the information contained within the report on the end of year Health Check on Performance and Strategic Objectives 2020-2021 Quarter 4.

18.4. WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS UPDATE – JULY 2021

The ACO People Services 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

Members agreed to note the information contained within the report.

18.5 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2021/2022

The ACO Corporate Services provided a brief overview of the Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022.

19. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OR 2)

There were no items of business that the Chair deemed urgent.

The Chair closed the meeting by wishing Members and Officers an enjoyable summer holiday period.