

**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**MINUTES OF THE HR & EQUALITIES MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY, 1 NOVEMBER, 2021**

**HELD REMOTELY VIA STARLEAF CONNECTION**

**15. PRESENT:**

| <b>Councillor</b>        | <b>Authority</b>   |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| P Drake (Chair)          | Vale of Glamorgan  |
| A Roberts (Deputy Chair) | Rhondda Cynon Taff |
| S Evans                  | Torfaen            |
| G Holmes                 | Rhondda Cynon Taff |
| M Colbran                | Merthyr Tydfil     |
| D Naughton               | Cardiff            |
| H Thomas                 | Newport            |
| H Jarvie                 | Vale of Glamorgan  |
| D Ali                    | Cardiff            |
| C Elsbury                | Caerphilly         |

**APOLOGIES:**

|          |            |
|----------|------------|
| R Shaw   | Bridgend   |
| S Malson | Torfean    |
| A Hussey | Caerphilly |

**ABSENT:**

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| W Hodgins | Blaenau Gwent |
| A Lister  | Cardiff       |

**OBSERVERS:**

**OFFICERS PRESENT:-** ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, T/ACO Geraint Thomas - Director of Corporate Support, T/AM B Thompson – Head of Training & Development, Ms S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer, Mr A Jones - Head of People Services

**16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Naughton and Cllr Drake declared an Interest in Item 5 - Living Wage Foundation Accreditation as Cardiff and Barry Councils have both adopted the Accreditation

## **17. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chair's announcements to record.

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

The minutes of the previous HR & Equalities meeting held on 05 July 2021, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

## **19. LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION ACCREDITATION**

The Director of People Services went through the report with Members and advised that due to staff salary costs this would further have to be ratified at full Fire Authority (FA) Meeting. Barry, Cardiff and 30 other Councils across Wales have already signed up to the Accreditation. The Service is currently paying all staff above the minimum and living wage and this is likely to continue to be the case after April 2022. There could be a financial impact in the future if the Service is unable to meet the rates but as it is a voluntary accreditation, the opportunity to leave at any time would be available.

It was asked by signing up to the Living Wage Foundation what it would do for the Service, the Director of People Services stated that it would be good for Recruitment and Attraction purposes and benefit as a good employer in Wales and send a good sign to employees.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Members noted the content of the report and agreed that the Service should gain accreditation by the Living Wage Foundation as a Real Living Wage employer. A further report will be presented at the next FA Meeting.

## **20. PROPOSED REFORMS AND NEW TERM OF REFERENCE FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Director of Corporate Services gave an update on the report that has previously been presented to this group, if Members are in agreement the proposal will be taken to Finance Audit & Performance Management (FAPM) and FA and implemented in the municipal year. It was asked for clarity on who the Subject Matter Experts that could be called on were and what expertise they would have, the Director of Corporate Services advised that for example if more knowledge or specific expertise around property was required an expert would be asked to attend the meeting to provide further information. It was

agreed that it would be beneficial to hold a skills matrix of all Members also.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

Members agreed to the recommendations in 2.4 and 2.5 and for these proposals to be presented back to the next FAPM and FA Meetings.

### **21. FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEMES – WALES GOVERNMENT CIRCULARS 2021/2022**

The Director of People Services advised 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.

The Welsh Government issues regular communications to all Chief Fire Officers, Chairs, and Clerks of Fire & Rescue Authorities, electronically in a standard circular template. The emails and circulars cover a variety of areas, including all aspects of Firefighters Pension Schemes, and need to be noted or actioned as appropriate. All updates received have been actioned accordingly.

It was raised if there was finances available for the McCloud ruling. The Director of People Services advised that there has been communication with the Local Government Association and Fire Brigade Union, in the form of a MoU which will enable progress to be made and a budget has been set aside.

## **RESOLVED THAT**

21.1 Members unanimously agreed to accept the Welsh Government Firefighters' Pension Scheme Circulars and emails that had been received in the 2021/2022 year to date.

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

### **22. SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE - OVERVIEW OF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT 2020/2021**

The Temporary Head of Training gave a short presentation advising that there were 5093 instructor days during 2020/21 in comparison to pre COVID 2019/2020 4503 days, the increase was due to having to put on more training courses to comply with social distancing and other

rules in place. Whilst most FRS across the UK shut down their training facilities at the start of COVID, SWF&RS did not see this as an option and kept the training facility open and continued with all risk critical training. No courses were cancelled because of COVID and there was 78% attendance on courses. It was asked if there are comparison KPI's available for pre / present COVID, these are being presented at the next Senior Management Team Meeting.

Cllr Evans asked if any restrictions on training had to take place due to equipment shortages and it was advised that this has not been the case and there have been no difficulties as yet. Cllr Holmes enquired to whether any training was provided for Avon FRS and it was advised that although the Service previously provided Training for other Services it was deemed not be a viable option with returns on third party training very poor. Some training does take place on an All Wales basis.

The Temporary Head of Training went through the 5 year plan and the main objectives.

#### **RESOLVED THAT**

Members noted the report and 5 year Strategic Plan.

#### **23. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR HR & EQUALITIES COMMITTEE 2021/2022**

Members noted the Forward Working Programme.

#### **24. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 or 2)**

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.