

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**MINUTES OF THE HR & EQUALITIES MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 24 JANUARY, 2022**

HELD REMOTELY VIA STARLEAF CONNECTION

25. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
P Drake (Chair		Vale of Glamorgan
A Roberts (Deputy Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
D Ali		Cardiff
M Colbran		Merthyr Tydfil
S Evans		Torfaen
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
A Hussey		Caerphilly
S Malson		Torfaen
D Naughton		Cardiff
R Shaw		Bridgend
H Thomas		Newport

APOLOGIES:

C Elsbury	Caerphilly
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ABSENT:

W Hodgins	Blaenau Gwent
A Lister	Cardiff

OFFICERS PRESENT:- ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, A Jones – Head of HR, Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer, Mr Mark Fry – Independent Pay Consultant (Item 7 only)

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

27. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair and Deputy Monitoring Officer provided Members with an overview of the process and procedure which would be carried out in order to consider Agenda Item 7 'Independent Pay Review – Principal Officers Remuneration'. They were advised that Officers would leave the meeting room beforehand so that the item could be discussed by Members, and Mr Mark Fry, an Independent Pay Consultant, would provide an electronic presentation, as well as answering Members questions accordingly.

The Chair highlighted that following Members discussions she would carry out a vote on the final recommendation which would be recorded in the formal minutes.

28. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous HR & Equalities meeting held on 1 November, 2021, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

29. REPORTS FOR DECISION

29.1. ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/2023

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 2022/2023 Pay Policy Statement had been drafted for Members.

RESOLVED THAT

29.1.1 Members agreed to review the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Pay Policy Statement for 2022/2023.

29.1.2 Following a question and answer session, Members agreed to approve the 2022/2023 Pay Policy Statement to be published by 31 March, 2022.

29.2. INDEPENDENT PAY REVIEW – PRINCIPAL OFFICERS REMUNERATION

Mark Fry, TRP Limited, and author of the pay review, joined the meeting remotely to deliver an electronic presentation to Members.

All Officers withdrew from the meeting and left the room whilst Members considered the following report Agenda Item 7 'Independent Pay Review – Principal Officers Remuneration'.

The Chair of the HR & Equalities Committee informed Members that the review of Brigade Manager (BM) / Principal Officers' (PO) remuneration was requested by Fire Authority Members following the completion of the Job Evaluation exercise for Green Book employees, and a report to the Authority on 19 July 2021. It was noted that the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) Pay Policy document stated that Principal Officers' remuneration should be reviewed annually by the local Fire & Rescue Authority and that the HR & Equalities Committee was assigned to consider PO remuneration and report findings to the Fire & Rescue Authority. The National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire & Rescue Services, Constitution and scheme of conditions of service stated there was a two-track approach to determining PO remuneration, as outlined above, one of those which was a local review undertaken by the Fire & Rescue Authority.

Members requested that the report be presented to the full Fire & Rescue Authority and be voted on by all Members. Members also stated that the Treasurer should have an input at the Fire & Rescue Authority meeting.

Following further debate, Members declined to go ahead with the presentation from the Independent Pay Consultant.

With reference to the data contained within the report across each of the UK Fire & Rescue Services, Members noted that although South Wales was 9th on the list as regards head of population, the Chief Fire Officer's pay was listed as 21st in the pay league.

Mark Fry informed Members that the last formal review on South Wales Fire & Rescue Service's Principal Officers pay had been carried out in 2004, and therefore the Service had fallen behind, which had resulted in a disparity between pay levels with other Services. He highlighted the work demand issues per head of population, and advised it would be more appropriate for the Service to be 7th in the pay league. He also took the opportunity to highlight and identify the risks for the Service in trying to attract and maintain key people as it was considered to be low paying compared to other organisations.

Mark Fry advised Members that consideration of the financial implications was important and this could be addressed over time rather than in adjustment, which would make the process more manageable and help to maintain key talent within South Wales Fire & Rescue Service.

RESOLVED THAT

Following consideration of the report and lengthy debate, Members unanimously agreed that the report should be deferred to the full Fire & Rescue Authority for Members to carry out a vote on the important decision.

The Chair thanked Mark Fry for addressing the meeting, and for assisting Members by providing useful background information.

All Officers returned to the room to continue with the formal meeting.

30. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

30.1. SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PEOPLE PLAN – ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS AGAINST THEMES

The ACO People Services reported that at the July 2019 HR & Equalities meeting, Members reviewed the outline proposal for the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service (SWFRS) People Plan. The Plan was developed further and subsequently signed off at the February 2020 HR & Equalities meeting.

Members were also made 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

RESOLVED THAT

- 30.1.1 Following a lengthy question and answer session, Members agreed to note the All Wales People & Organisational Development Strategy.
- 30.1.2 Members agreed to note the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service People Plan attached to the report at Appendix 1.
- 30.1.3 Members agreed to note the progress against the SWFRS Plan attached to the report at Appendix 2.
- 30.1.4 Following a request by Members, Officers agreed to present a report on E-Recruitment at a future meeting.
- 30.1.5 Following a question and answer session, Officers agreed to present a report on the Mental Health Strategy at a future meeting.

30.2 ESTABLISHMENT STRUCTURE UPDATE

The Head of HR provided Members with an overview of the current position with regard to the Service's staffing structure proposed

future changes. 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.

31. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

The Director of People Services provided Members with the Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2021/2022.

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

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their help and support when discussing such important topics.