

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**MINUTES OF THE HR & EQUALITIES MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 22 FEBRUARY, 2021**

HELD REMOTELY VIA STARLEAF CONNECTION

30. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
P Drake (Chair		Vale of Glamorgan
A Roberts (Deputy Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taf
D Ali		Cardiff
M Colbran		Merthyr Tydfil
C Elsbury		Caerphilly
S Evans		Torfaen
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
W Hodgins		Blaenau Gwent
A Hussey		Caerphilly
H Jarvie		Vale of Glamorgan
A Jones		Torfaen
D Naughton		Cardiff
R Shaw		Bridgend
H Thomas		Newport

APOLOGIES:

ABSENT:

A Lister Cardiff

OBSERVERS:

D T Davies Caerphilly
S Zavery Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

OFFICERS PRESENT:- DCO S Chapman – Monitoring Officer, ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, ACFO R Prendergast – Director of Technical Services, AM G Davies – Head of Training & Development, A Jones – Head of HR, Ms S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer, CM Dave Crews – Mental Health Officer, C Wood – Equalities & Diversity Officer, D Howells – Welsh Language Officer

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

32. CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Sandra Zavery from Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service, who was attending the meeting as an observer.

33. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous HR & Equalities meeting held on 2 November, 2020, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

34. SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY – ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

The Director of People Services reminded Members that South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority were 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 2021/2022 Pay Policy Statement had been drafted for Members.

RESOLVED THAT

34.1 Members agreed to review South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Pay Policy Statement for 2021/2022.

34.2 Members agreed to approve the 2021/2022 Pay Policy Statement to be published by 31 March, 2021.

35. VEHICLE LEASE SCHEME – OP-03.009

The Director of Technical Services informed Members that there had been significant changes to the taxation regulations regarding the provision of Emergency Response Vehicles. The South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority Vehicle Lease scheme had been updated to ensure its continued tax compliance and sustainability.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a question and answer session, Members agreed to note the introduction of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority Vehicle Lease Scheme, Procedure OP-03.009.

36. WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2021

The Head of HR advised Members that the presented report provided 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

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

36.2 Following a question and answer session, Officers agreed to provide Members with further information on why there had been an increase on the number of applicants who had not provided a response on their application forms as to whether they were Welsh Speakers or not.

36.3 Officers also agreed to consider providing Members with development training on the Welsh Language at a future HR & Equalities meeting.

37. FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEMES – WALES GOVERNMENT CIRCULARS 2020/2021

The Director of People Services reminded 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 issues regular communications to all Chief Fire Officers, Chairs, and Clerks of Fire & Rescue Authorities, electronically in a standard circular template. These emails and circulars could cover a variety of areas, including all aspects of Firefighters Pension Schemes, and must be noted or actioned as appropriate.

RESOLVED THAT

37.1 Members agreed to accept the Welsh Government Firefighters' Pension Scheme Circulars and emails that had been received in the 2020/2021 year to date.

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

38. TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT – HIGH RISE TRAINING UPDATE

The Head of Training & Development presented a report which provided Members with an updated position on the ongoing High Rise Training undertaken by South Wales Fire & Rescue Service to date.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a lengthy question and answer session on ensuring the Service had sufficient resources in order to deliver the training, as well as the number of issues relating to flammable cladding on high rise buildings, Members agreed to note the contents of the report.

The Chair thanked Officers for their individual responses and for providing an excellent report.

39. GENDER PAY GAP STATEMENT

The Head of HR reminded 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 is 30 March 2021.

The Gender Pay Gap Statement was presented in the report attached at Appendix 1.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to approve the 2020/2021 Gender Pay Gap Statement to be published by 30 March, 2021.

40. ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2019 TO 31 MARCH 2020

The Equalities & Diversity Officer reminded Members that South Wales Fire & Rescue Service was required under the Equality Act (2010) (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to publish an Annual Equality Report for the period 1 April to 31 March every year.

The Annual Equality Report met the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service's legal duty to publish a report that demonstrated the Service's progress and compliance against the General Equality Duty and Wales Specific Equality Duties, and focused primarily on data, as well as what the organisation had done during the period 1 April, 2019 to 31 March, 2020.

RESOLVED THAT

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

Members thanked Officers for their informative report.

41. ESTABLISHMENT STRUCTURE – JANUARY 2021

The Head of HR advised that the presented report provided Members with an overview of the current position with regard to the Service's staffing structure following the agreement at the Fire & Rescue Authority's meeting held in September 2018, to approve a restructure in order to meet future challenges and demands.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the contents of the report.

42. SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE PEOPLE PLAN 2021/2024

The Director of People Services informed Members that the aim of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Services People Plan 2021/2024 was to enable the Service to meet evolving current and future expectations in achieving organisational aims and objectives by recruiting, developing, and retaining a highly skilled, motivated, and bilingual workforce that represented and championed the diversity of the communities we serve. The People Plan also aimed to identify and maximise potential through effective people management and development, leading to a high performance culture whilst making the most effective use of public funds.

The People Plan would allow the Service to work within the high level direction agreed but to tailor approaches where necessary in order to reflect the individual needs of the organisation.

RESOLVED THAT

42.1 Members agreed to note the content of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service People Plan 2021/2024.

42.2 Following discussion, Members agreed to note that they would receive a further report on the number of objectives at a future meeting.

43. PREPARATION FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

The Equalities & Diversity Officer advised that the presented report would provide Members with a brief overview of the upcoming Socio-Economic Duty, highlights of what the Service had already put into place, and an overview of the measures and actions being implemented.

RESOLVED THAT

43.1 Following debate and a question and answer session on collaboration within local areas, Members agreed to note the contents of the report.

43.2 Members agreed to receive a six-monthly update report after October 2021.

44. REPORT ON MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT AND ACTIVITIES

The Mental Health Officer presented a report which provided Members with an update on the key work-streams the Service was undertaking in relation to the Mental Health Project.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the contents of the report, and thanked Officers for their detailed presentation.

45. PROPOSED NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Monitoring Officer presented a report to Members which proposed updating the Terms of Reference for a newly formed Scrutiny Committee, further to Members consideration of an earlier report dated 12 October, 2020, on proposed reform of Fire & Rescue Authority scrutiny. It highlighted the knock-on implications that such changes would have on membership of other committees.

RESOLVED THAT

- 45.1 Members agreed to consider the proposed implications of the scrutiny proposals and to provide views to shape the report to enable Fire & Rescue Authority consideration at their meeting in March.
- 45.2 Following debate, the Monitoring Officer agreed to circulate a copy of the coloured spreadsheet to individual Members, which highlighted the political breakdown of specific Committees.

46. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

The Director of People Services provided Members with the Forward Work Programme for 2020/2021.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2020/2021.

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

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.