

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE HR & EQUALITIES MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER, 2015 AT SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS

11. PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
S J Jones (Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
S Bradwick		Rhondda Cynon Taff
P Drake		Vale of Glamorgan
C Elsbury		Caerphilly
E Galsworthy		Merthyr Tydfil
E Hacker		Vale of Glamorgan
R McKerlich		Cardiff
B Morgan		Rhondda Cynon Taff
G Phillips		Cardiff
S Pickering		Rhondda Cynon Taff
M Powell		Monmouthshire
M Rahman		Newport
P Seabourne		Torfaen

APOLOGIES:

C James	Bridgend
A Jones (Deputy Chair)	Torfaen
J Morgan	Blaenau Gwent

ABSENT:

OFFICERS PRESENT:- ACO P Haynes – Director of People Services, Mr C Powell – Deputy Monitoring Officer, Mr M Malson – Head of Human Resources, A/AM I Greenman – Acting Head of Training & Development

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

13. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Director of People Services brought Members' attention to the following update on Firefighter Pension Schemes.

- Arising from the introduction of the Firefighters' Modified Pension Scheme the HR Department has written to 234 personnel who were employed as a retained firefighter between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006 to advise them that they would be eligible to purchase pension rights under the terms of the new pension arrangements.
- The Fire & Rescue Authority, like every other Fire & Rescue Authority in the UK has been named as joint respondents at an Employment Tribunal which covers all members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992 who were either granted tapering protection rights or who were automatically transferred into the 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme. At this time details of three named cases from South Wales and general details of more than 1,700 other firefighter pension scheme members have been supplied to Bevan Brittan who are acting on behalf of all the Fire & Rescue Authorities. The first case in Wales is scheduled for late October, 2015.
- The Pensions Ombudsman has published his determination in the case: GAD V Milne which concerns the lump sum paid to a firefighter on retirement. The case will have relevance to more than 200 firefighters who retired in the early 2000s. Rhondda Cynon Taff Pensions Section, who administer all the Firefighters' Pension Scheme on behalf of South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority have confirmed that they are waiting for a standard discharge form to be agreed by GAD, Her Majesty's Treasury, and Welsh Government, in order to be able to notify those retirees.

14. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the HR & Equalities meeting held on 20 July 2015, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

15. ANNUAL SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT 1 APRIL 2014 – 31 MARCH 2015

The Head of Human Resources reported to Members on the average number of shifts/working days lost per employee, in each category of staff (excluding Retained staff), for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March

2015 which was noted as 8.74 days per employee in comparison with 9.58 days per employee for 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

The Head of Human Resources also advised of further analysis of short and long term absences, self-certification and accidents on duty.

Members requested that an additional report be prepared on sickness categories, reasons and cost implications. It was agreed that this be placed on the Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the contents of the report.

16. GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINE ISSUES FOR THE YEAR 1 APRIL 2014 TO 31 MARCH 2015

The Head of Human Resources provided a summary of grievance and discipline matters investigated by the Resolution Unit during the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Members discussed the general background to disciplinaries and grievances. They noted how data reflected changes in the incidence and types of disciplinary actions taken.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the content of the report.

17. REPORT ON HR AND PAYROLL SYSTEM INTEGRATION PROJECT

The Head of Human Resources informed Members that in 2011/12 the Risk Reduction Plan identified a requirement to review all back office ICT systems. The main focus was on the integration of HR, Payroll and Finance systems, where it was recognised improvement in these systems would have the greatest impact for the service.

A tendering process was undertaken in collaboration with Mid & West Wales FRS for an Integrated HR & Payroll system. The final contract was awarded to Core International in 2013.

The implementation of the Core system was broken down into three phases to be delivered by an established Project Team. Phase 1 was scheduled for completion in September 2014 and the full project completion date estimated to be late in 2015.

Due to a number of complex issues, in particular, the success of Core International in attracting new business, plus additional factors associated with collaboration, the complexity of FRS multi contracts, their impact on system configuration and the complexity of data migration and reconciliation there has been slippage in the delivery of the project.

Despite these many challenges thanks to the considerable efforts of the project teams and all involved, significant progress has been made towards achieving a “go live” date for phase 1 in October 2015.

In dealing with these implementation challenges there have been additional costs incurred due to the need for additional consultancy days and the maintenance of legacy systems.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the contents of the report.

18. SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY – ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT – JNC INCLUSION

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

The Fire & Rescue Authority also determined the HR & Equalities Committee should review the Pay Policy Statement and report to the full Committee. Recent developments relating to the substance of the Policy Statement has required that matters under review are considered for recommendation to the Fire & Rescue Authority when appropriate.

RESOLVED THAT

18.1 Members reviewed the potential inclusions to the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority’s Pay Policy Statement.

18.2 Members considered and agreed the following clause in relation to the Pay Policy Statement;

‘The Fire & Rescue Authority employs Chief Officers under Joint National Council terms and conditions which are incorporated in their contracts. The Joint National Council for Chief Officers negotiates on national (UK) annual cost of living pay increases for this group, and any award of same is determined on this basis.

Chief Officers employed under Joint National Council terms and conditions are contractually entitled to any national Joint National Council determined pay rises and this Council will therefore pay these as and when determined in accordance with current contractual requirements'.

19. FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEME 1992 – SPLIT PENSION

The ACO People Services presented the report which identifies the background to changes in Rule B5A (Split Pension) as part of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992, and sets out the key features, impacts and significant points for Members' consideration and final determination.

RESOLVED THAT

19.1 Members noted the situations which may lead to the instance of a split pension taking place.

19.2 Members agreed upon the awarding of split pensions in cases of:- compulsory demotion following an organisation review, following temporary promotion, making a reasonable adjustment for medical reasons, pay protection ceasing, disciplinary related demotion or any combination thereof.

20. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The ACO People Services presented the Forward Work Programme for the HR & Equalities Committee 2015/2016.

RESOLVED THAT

Members accepted the Forward Work Programme for the HR & Equalities Committee 2015/16.

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

There were no items of urgent business.