COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 27 MARCH 2025 AT 1030 HRS
IN MEETING ROOM 08 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

PRESENT:-

COMMISSIONERS:
Chairperson - Mr Vij Randeniya

OFFICERS:
Gabrielle Greathead – Interim Monitoring Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Christian Hadfield – Director of Corporate Support, Christian Landeg-John, Advisor to Commissioners, Scott Morris - Governance Officer, Kate Owen - Secretariat, Assistant Chief Officer Alison Reed – Director of People Services, Lisa Shroll – Head of People Services, Wayne Thomas – Head of Corporate Support.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Brian Thompson – Director of Technical Services Hannah Goodchild – People Services Manager, Kate Havard - Audit Wales, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Dean Loader – Director of Service Delivery, Dominic Mika – Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, Lisa Mullan, Head of Finance, Procurement and Property.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairperson's announcements.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – 7 FEBRUARY 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 February 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

5. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

There were no updates on outstanding actions.

6. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26

The Director of People Services presented a report setting out a Pay Policy Statement for the 2025/26 financial year, as required by the Localism Bill 2010. The Statement was required to outline the remuneration levels of its Chief Officers, the approach to pay on appointment, change to the level of Chief Officer pay and the Service's general policy approach to all staff.

It was anticipated that there would be sufficient time to publish the Statement bilingually by the statutory deadline of 31 March 2025.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

6.1   That the Board of Commissioners approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26.

7. PRE-RECRUITMENT GOVERNANCE

The Head of People Services presented a report setting out proposals for pre-recruitment governance, in order to address a lack of transparency in recruitment procedures identified in the culture review report.

The report proposed the introduction of a structured vacancy review process prior to recruitment to all vacancies within the Service. Responsibility for the review process would sit with the recruiting manager in each case, and the proposed changes aimed to increase efficiency, improve resilience, enhance workforce planning and financial/strategic oversight and strengthen line manager accountability. The Chair welcomed the proposals as a means of reducing delays in recruiting to posts.

RESOLVED:

7.1   to note the report and the assurances given in relation to progress developing Recruitment and Promotions processes; and

7.2   to agree the revised recruitment approval process set out in the report, including:-

- The introduction of line manager responsibilities and due diligence into the pre-recruitment process
- The streamlining of the PeopleXD authorisation process.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

**8.   NFCC COMMISSIONED REPORT – INDEPENDENT CHALLENGE
          AND SUPPORT PANEL**

The Director of People Services presented a report introducing the report of
the Independent Challenge and support Panel, established by the National
Fire Chiefs Council as part of its work to improve culture and inclusion within
Services.

RESOLVED:

8.1   To note the report.

9.   AGILE WORKING FRAMEWORK

The Head of People Services presented a report setting out a status update
on the Service's Agile Working project, which was working towards less rigid
working practices, increased flexibility and employee satisfaction. The
introduction of agile working was a strategic priority for the Service, following
the findings of the culture review report. The report set out three proposed
phases, and the consultation on the proposals had just been completed. The
next step would be the development of an Engagement and Communication
Plan to ensure consistency and transparency. It was noted that further work
was required with Estates and ICT to ensure that e.g. stations were properly
equipped to become remote working locations for staff otherwise not based
there. This would form part of the Phase Two development framework, to be
completed by the end of September. The Chair noted further:-

- the need to ensure that mechanisms were in place to measure the
  impact of the policies, once introduced
- the varying expectations and attitudes of employees across various
  cohorts
- That care was needed to ensure that essential elements of productivity
  and staff satisfaction that could only be achieved by in-person working
  were not lost.

RESOLVED:

9.1   To note the report and the assurances given in relation to
          progress to address the recommendations at paragraphs 108-
          110 of the culture review report; and

9.2   To note the intention to develop a Future Workplace Strategy.

10.   FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR PEOPLE COMMITTEE 2024/25

The Interim Monitoring Officer introduced the latest iteration of the Committee's Forward plan 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

   10.1   To note the report.

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

No such business was brought forward.

12.   ITEMS TO REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The report considered at Minute 6 – Pay Policy Statement 2025/26 - requires the approval of the Board of Commissioners.

13.   CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair made the following requests:

a)   That where a Director is unable to attend a Committee meeting, an appropriate deputy be nominated to attend in their place, on the basis that Directors with cross-cutting responsibilities should be represented irrespective of whether they were presenting a particular report.

b)   That where the subject of a report was identified as an area of risk in the Strategic Risk Register, the risk implications are highlighted to Commissioners so that the impact of management and mitigation measures could be scrutinised.

c)   That at the close of each committee meeting there is an informal agenda item providing an opportunity for meeting participants to reflect on the effectiveness of the meeting.