

Sayfor Surrey

Fire Brigades Union, Surrey



FBU Chair Report

With the success of the action on the 30th June, by Unions in respect of the “Pensions” theft many members are asking when the FBU will be involved.

The ConDem Government announced in the budget that preceded the General Election proposals to “tax” public services workers an additional £2.8 Billion by increasing employee pension contributions.

The result will mean a pay reduction of about £1400 per year in addition to the loss of income due to pay freeze imposed by the employers. Subsequently, some 18months on, the “Hutton” report concluded that employees would have to extend their working life and accept alternative scales on completion of terms – Final salary scheme to be scrapped.

This will ultimately lead to fire fighters climbing ladders, risking their lives and responding to all types of emergency situations with less reward and aging teams. A “Dads Army” of fire service provisions and for those who cannot meet standards will be thrown on the scrap heap and deemed not competent.

The time is here, the fight is yours, and the outcomes are your responsibility. During the next few weeks EC Members will be available to visit Branch meetings, team briefings and watches to give details of the forthcoming campaign which will eventually lead to strike action to prevent this draconian attack on front line public services.

Please contact your Divisional Reps giving details of those meetings.

With the continued pay freeze and unprecedented reductions in fire services, front

line services are at breaking point and experienced service personnel doubt the reasoning for continuing a career in the fire services. Despite reassurances from Senior Management of better training, more flexibility working arrangements and better rewards the reality is far from those expectations. More for less is the common theme as “certain” management representatives cajole, bully and harass staff into a submissive role. Morale is at an all time low, anger replacing enthusiasm for a service which one was proud to serve and dissolution and frustration at a service lacking support and investment.

The National Executive at this year’s conference were challenged to take a lead and address the continued destruction and individual authority autonomy to cuts services putting staff and public at greater risk through ill planned, poorly executed and unreasoned, unmeasured, untested changes.

Over the next months Brigade Official will be involved in directional campaigning challenging governments at all levels to turn the tide on fiscal waste and focus on quality affordable intervention in emergency situations. Where these measures require political and direct actions staff will be balloted to take all necessary steps to ensure public safety is paramount but service rewards and working conditions are not further eroded.

Watch this space – get involved now!

The “Control Merger” process still rolls on without details or proper involvement with staff or unions.

Serious challenges about the ability of

technology to replicate human interactions are ignored as targets for capital expenditure and revenue incomes are the basis for projects. Staff are constantly stressed and confused by the myriad of decision and policy changes through mismanagement of yet another doomed project that leads to huge waste of resources and finances.

Ever increasing timescales mean that the uncertainty of the amalgamation of the Isle of Wight redirects provisions that could be used to greater benefit within our own service.

Whilst some within the task group continue to pursue singular objectives the reality is many in authority have grave concerns that any perceived savings or improvements in service have long been lost through the inability to secure suitable agreements or provisions between the various stakeholders.

The FBU continue to monitor, challenge theoretical aspirations that constantly fail to meet expectations. The only people who support this project are those who are delusional by expecting a cut in costs and the engineering people and companies providing technology! Local and Regional FBU officials support our members through this carbuncle of a program that puts our members' lives on hold as the uncertainty affects not only the immediate quality of life but also longer term goals of personal circumstances.

Managers must be held to account for this intolerable situation and as a Union the need for solidarity for our members paramount.

The continued saga of the Rank to Role process within Mobilising and Control still remains unresolved.

Decisions being made on false or incorrect information through the various departmental responsibilities within the service have left members unsatisfied, confused and frustrated at a lack of understanding by some of the main participants in the process.

A number of individual and collective disputes have been raised with management but with little progress and rhetoric is the order of the day. Middle Managers changes are still confusing and unacceptable to meet the needs of the service. The anticipation of Senior Management that all the responsibilities can be devolved to other key players in the service regardless of national and local agreements add to the lack of clarity and purposeful direction of Surrey Fire & Rescue Services.

Whilst the FBU has some support for alternative governance we will need greater confidence that expertise of policy making process can be managed by a management structure that would replace the Councils Bureaucratic and time consuming autonomy.

Brigade Secretaries Report

IRMP/PSP

Now that Surrey county council have approved the all the planned cuts in service and the service has published an action plan listing the cuts that will take place before April 2013. The rest of the cuts are expected in the 2 years after that. I have already been contacted by the service for the first consultation meeting for the new whole time shift pattern and I fully expect a meeting date very soon to consult on the service's plans to implement a new rota system to replace the existing RDS. I will obviously keep you updated with progress and consult with the membership when the detail is there to do so.

Allowances SOP

After 2 years of getting nowhere, we now finally have a draft SOP to consider. I have sent out the SOP along with a comparison table of where we are now compared to where we would be if we accepted the SOP. I have asked that all branch's bring a branch mandate back to the Area meeting in July. I will of course publish the result of the vote.

For more details on any of the issues contained in Sayfor Surrey see your FBU Branch Rep.

Capability

I have been and am still involved in “debate” with the service regarding their use of disciplining members under capability for being off sick with recognised medical issues even ones covered under the Disability Discrimination Act. With the proposed extended retirement age the government what’s to impose on us, we could see members having their employment terminated without any medically enhanced pensions (sounds familiar; oh yes the London court case the FBU won which Surrey seem to have taken no notice of).

I need all members to be reminded that medical issues must not be dealt with by discipline or capability, they should follow the clearly defined process within the pension schemes (please contact me for advice). If anyone hears of discipline or capability being used on members who are suffering from ill health or injury related sickness, they must contact me immediately.

Communications

As mentioned above, with the likelihood of strikes over pension cuts increasing by the day, it is more important than ever that we have excellent communications within the whole union. Please ensure FBU notice boards are kept clear of out of date or irrelevant material and FBU post is put on the boards. Ensure members check www.fbuserrey.co.uk and www.fbu.org.uk regularly for updates. Make sure their home address and other contact details are correct with our membership secretary Nigel Burchell 07769249098 nigel.burchell@fbu.org.uk and discuss and hold regular branch meetings to debate and raise resolutions accordingly. I am happy to attend branch meetings but please check your proposed date with me first.

Brigade HS&W Coordinators Report

The PSP has now been ratified & the Service are now into the implementation phase. There

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continues to be numerous concerns about the plan itself & the FBU will be challenging it vigorously in the coming weeks & months. Everyone needs to keep up the good work & carry on campaigning & discussing the main issues.

At the last AC meeting the subject of hot fire training was raised with many issues being discussed. Andy & I had a very productive meeting with the Service H&S Team & the Training Manager responsible for the BA training. Suffice is to say that we are very pleased with the outcome of that meeting. The Service had already identified certain areas for improvement & work is ongoing to address the concerns of members. Interestingly, other brigades are raising exactly the same concerns. An update will follow when available.

New rescue equipment has been viewed by the FBU & Service today following an update on the project recently. Provided there are no obvious H&S concerns kit should be issued for trial at 5 stations by the end of the week.

Following the catastrophic failure of the 135 ladder in another brigade the Service has amended our SOP for 135 ladder use & were very quick to act & check the safety of those in service in Surrey. We also looked at other concerns that was raised at the last AC. A verbal update will be given.

A demonstration of a new Incident Command Unit was also given today, with a view to procuring a replacement for the temporary one. Again a verbal update will be given. A wider discussion is planned with the Service for general BA & Scania problems as some issues are interlinked.

The recent Hindhead tunnel exercises were very impressive & credit must be given to the Service for the work that was put in to ensure their smooth running. There are some H&S elements that have been highlighted as a result & these have been fed into the review process i.e. PDA, crewing levels at the control point & safe systems of work being compromised by the cross-over doors.

Brigade Organisers (Membership Secretary) **Report**

1. Last payment (Train Tickets) for 26th March London Lobby on 18th July 2011.
2. members notified reference AIF nomination (new form to be filled out) Members should be aware to change names of nominee if circumstances change.
3. Member to be presented 25 year badge and award.
4. Can Reps inform the Brigade Organiser if members on Branches have sabbatical's.

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