



OFFICE OF COMMONS

DOWNING STREET, LONDON SW1A 0AA

Thank you for your letter of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014 which arrived today about the Government's reforms to fire fighters' pensions and the statements made by the Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis.

As you will be aware, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has been in discussions with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and other interested parties over the current pension reforms since 2011.

You suggest that in these discussions, the FBU has never had any indication that transitional protection was a potential avenue to discuss. However, in the period leading up to the publication of the Proposed Final agreement in May 2012, it was open to the fire unions and employers to propose changes to any aspect of the Government's initial scheme design, including transitional protection. Despite this, no proposal was made by the Fire Brigades Union on transitional protections or any other issue that they suggested would be sufficient for them to reach agreement.

In his letter to the Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis, of 11 April, Matt Wrack, the General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, stated that the Union did raise the issue of transitional protections in its Trade Dispute letter of 16 May 2013. However, this was a full year after the Proposed Final Agreement, including the transitional protections, had been published.

In responding to Alison Seabeck MP in Parliament, Mr Lewis said that at the time the arrangement on transitional protections was made with the Police, the Fire Brigades Union did not go down that road. Given that the transitional arrangements for the new Police Pension Scheme formed part of the Government's Proposed Final Agreement in respect of that scheme in 2012, I am assured that his statement was accurate.