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South West Region 13
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TO: ALL MEMBERS - WILTSHIRE

5TH February 2013

Dear Brother / Sister

Following a meeting between FBU Officials and the CFO of WFRS on the 17th January 2013, the CFO took the decision to withdraw from negotiations on the re-organisation of WFRS, completely ignoring nationally agreed protocols, and implementing a timetable for the imposition of cuts and enforced contractual changes. He took this action after the FBU in Wiltshire had presented a response to the Brigades negotiating team rejecting their first formal proposals based around Grey book conditions. The CFO believed that the FBU Officials in Wiltshire weren't representing their members.

I can categorically state that the response from the FBU was compiled after consultation with our members in Wiltshire and represents their views. The response was reflecting the feelings of our Members and I make no apology for that but we gave alternative solutions, in fact the last page of our response stated "*we offer alternatives in the belief that further negotiations CAN reach a settlement*". We also repeated several times during the meeting with the CFO that while we rejected the offer in its current detail we felt that it was a framework we could negotiate around. The CFO wasn't interested.

The following day he sent out a 3 page letter to all staff explaining his position. A few days later all staff received a 7 page 'Our Service Our Future' document detailing the changes and a timetable for imposition. FBU Members in Wiltshire are telling officials they believe the CFO's intention is to impose his vision upon the staff of WFRS, without agreement if necessary. The WFRS Negotiators have repeatedly indicated that they see the Hub Station concept as the way forward and future of the UK Fire Service.

We have always believed that the negotiations were progressive and fruitful, and that our relationship with the negotiating team was positive. The FBU have always responded constructively, giving alternatives for the Brigade negotiators to consider.

The FBU negotiating team have had to work hard to get clarity on what the Brigades intentions are and whether their ideas were genuinely about improving the service the Brigade provides, complying with the Governments cuts agenda or just full filling the wishes of the CFO, which included Firefighters digging ditches, fitting the internet and taking on some aspects of Social work.

The threat of imposed contractual changes has now been withdrawn and negotiations re-established. The Service has set out their priorities as Hub Stations, the duty system to be worked at the Hub stations, the RDS Salary scheme pilot, switch crewing of aerial appliances, 12 hour shifts and shift start times.

WFRS are prepared to consult with us over our alternative views on efficiency savings and we believe this to be a key area that links in to all the areas they wish to negotiate on.

WFRS and the CFO have confirmed their commitment to abiding by the nationally agreed Industrial Relations protocol and this should ensure we do not see a repeat of the Service withdrawing from negotiations and threatening to impose contractual changes.

We hope that this clarification of the latest will pave the way for meaningful negotiations and to this end the FBU negotiating team will be attending future meetings in our effort to reach an agreed settlement with WFRS.

To keep FBU members instantly up to date with information and developments we have introduced a Text alert system. If you are not receiving these texts but would like to, then contact me with your number and you will start to receive alerts.

We cannot sustain regular Home address circulars so we are also sending out more detailed documents to home personal email addresses. If you would like to be included on this list then just let me have the email address of your choice.

Best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B Thorley', written over a horizontal line.

BRENT THORLEY
WILTSHIRE BRIGADE SECRETARY