



# Avon FBVU's

November 2010



## CFO TELLS MANAGERS CUTS EQUATE TO 108 FF POSTS

**T**he Spending Review means AFRS faces some difficult times ahead, as we have been informing members over the past weeks, and the CFO has now told managers that the scale of the cuts required equates to the loss of 104 Firefighter posts, 4 control staff plus losses at all levels of middle management.

The CFO also released a statement saying there is actually no plan to cut the jobs! Well, we ask, if there is no plan to do so, why use an illustration with them? Avon FBU have requested meetings with the CFO to discuss this matter in order to find a way forward through a joint approach, sadly these requests have so far not been met. We have to ask why? Why tell managers and not the FBU? We ask AFRS to stop hiding behind the spending review, start dispelling the rumours and talk to us openly about shaping AFRS for the future.

AVON FBU HAVE NOW FORMALLY WRITTEN TO THE CFO ASKING FOR IMMEDIATE NEGOTIATIONS TO START ON THE WAY FORWARD FOR AFRS.

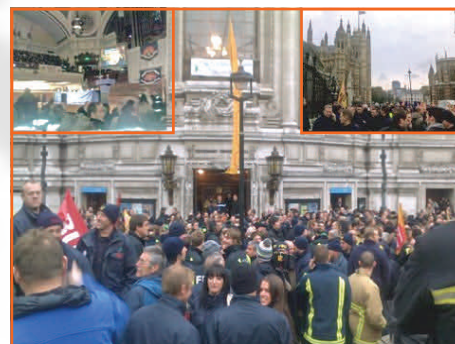
In order to protect the lives of FF's and indeed the public, we will continue to push for these negotiations with a view to protecting Front Line Services and Personnel.

The trend in FF deaths nationally is both alarming and unacceptable, we believe this is firmly linked to the direction the Fire Service has moved nationally away from its Response priorities. We can not continue putting resources into initiatives and non essential areas if we are then unable to respond effectively when we are most needed - **IN AN EMERGENCY!**

It is time to get back to our core role with the correct equipment and training. We can not let the "nice to have" side of our service drain resources from our main role. This could well put lives at risk and be exasperated by the cuts to come unless the balance is redressed. Difficult questions now have to be asked about the role and necessity in the current financial climate of all departments, we have to recognize our primary role and secure that above all else.

It is not by luck that we have not seen the draconian cuts within AFRS that some other brigades have witnessed, it is due to an excellent working relationship with both our management and Fire Authority in the past. We have worked together to produce what we believe to be one of the best Fire & Rescue Services in the country, one in which our employers, we as employees and indeed the public deserve. We sincerely hope that this continues and we do not start to fall to the level of some other diabolical, dangerous and lunatic authorities such as Merseyside.

On November 17th members attended the National Rally in London against the governments cuts. Whilst over 2000 members listened to some inspiring speeches, others met with their MP's to discuss local and national issues. As a result, many local MP's lobbied by Avon FBU members now wish to meet with the Fire Authority, the CFO and the FBU in order to discuss further how to move forward.



Writing to your councillors and MP's is essential to raise awareness and achieve results; it is worthwhile and it does achieve results!

*Professional Judgment 0  
German Helicopter Trials 1*

The fact that there are even going to be any trials for a Helicopter many find unbelievable, however, what is even more unbelievable is the fact they are now due to take place in Germany! So whilst they do not have enough money to keep Front Line Services, they do have enough to transport staff abroad and pursue trials for something that clearly has some serious operational flaws and is also, according to the professional judgement we have received, very unlikely to improve upon the excellent Rescue Service our current four Rescue Tenders provide. We still have no costing for the trials, however, you all seem sure the money could be better spent by saving your jobs and services!

**SAFER  
FIREFIGHTERS  
SAFER  
COMMUNITIES**



# CUTS LIES ATTACKS CUTS LIES ATTACKS CUTS LIES ATTACKS CUTS LIES ATTACKS CUTS LIES ATTACKS

Humberside

Humberside Fire Authority has revealed how it plans to make cuts by reducing the number of Firefighters on appliances from five to four, which could lead to 170 job cuts. A final decision will be made in the New Year and any agreed changes will come into effect in April.

Ian Murray, from the FBU, said: "Any reduction in the front-line emergency service we consider to be putting a serious risk to the lives of the public and to the Firefighters who attend these incidents."

London

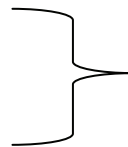
London members have still to see the return of 27 appliances that were originally removed for "ASS ET & CO" to use during strikes. Ben Sprung, London FBU, said: "Coleman has denied our dispute had anything to do with cuts in the service for Londoners. This proves that has been the agenda all along. He seems willing to put his vendetta against Firefighters above the safety of London. This man is clearly not fit for office."

London Members have been attacked verbally in the press and even worse driven into on picket lines resulting in hospitalisation. The lies written about the London dispute make it clear that if you want people to know the truth then you have to tell them yourself! So please get writing about what you know - your job - to people that don't know but make decisions about it!

Wiltshire

The brigade has made it clear that they will look at everything and (almost) anything to facilitate the cost savings. At a recent informal meeting the following areas were identified by management as options:

- 1) Downgrade Swindon to go Nucleus Crewed
- 2) Downgrade Salisbury to go 'Day Crewed Plus'
- 3) Downgrade Stratton to go 'Day Crewed Plus'
- 4) Chippenham to go 'Day Crewed Plus'
- 5) Westlea to go 'Day Crewed Plus'
- 6) Downgrade Trowbridge to go Nucleus Crewed



*THESE ARE  
VICTORIAN  
WORKING  
PRACTICES!*

Note: "Day Crewed Plus" is a management term for a new system that would mean Firefighters working for up to 96 hours CONTINUOUSLY in return for a bribe to sell out our colleagues jobs.

Essex

Essex fire crews are astonished at the decision last week to splash-out £250,000 on pre-tender works and committing to a £20 Million expansion of the Fire HQ only weeks before savage cuts in frontline services are expected to be announced. This comes after Essex Fire Authority members voted back in November 2009, to "put plans on hold until there is clarity over the future financial position of public sector bodies."

Keith Flynn Essex FBU Secretary said: "Firefighters across Essex are furious as they now see millions of pounds being committed to expensive building works and IT projects at HQ while service managers are turning up at fire stations warning firefighters of the worst cuts in Essex history to hit frontline fire & rescue services.

One minute the chief can't sign an agreement aimed at protecting vital 999 services at fire stations then the next minute he seems to be rushing to sign multi-million pound contracts for expanding his HQ Empire."

N  
O  
2  
Fire  
Deaths

In 1992, the then Tory President of the Board of Trade, Michael Hesiltine made it his business to investigate the Health & Safety at Work Act with a view to relaxing the legislation. Despite his determination and an open hostility to trade unions, he found there was no significant will from businesses to deregulate the Act. Even so, he still said in 1995, "health and safety is...one of the single largest...burdens on business."

So here we are 18 years later and the Tories are back in power with their new found Liberal friends and the Prime Minister, thinking it would be a popular move and buoyed on by "elf n safety" stories in tabloids, commissioned the former cabinet minister, Lord Young to look into health & safety legislation with a view to deregulation. Straight away he put emergency services in his sight. Instead of taking into account the increasing death toll of firefighters, he said emergency services were "paid for doing a job that involves risk" and legislation should not be "an excuse for inaction". He also said "Technically speaking, the firemen (sic) could say they wouldn't go to a fire because it was too dangerous". I've yet to find a firefighter who has refused to go to a fire!

So now we have the awaited report, "Common Sense Common Safety" and, guess what, like Mr Hesiltine before him Lord Young found there was little need to change legislation and admitted most of the nonsensical health & safety stories were just that - stories and myths peddled by the tabloid press. Instead the report suggested, among other ill considered ideas, HSE can help create an understanding of legislation by offering simple advice to businesses. Something HSE have been doing for years if he bothered to look.

However Police and the Fire Service do get a mention: "Police officers and firefighters should not be at risk of investigation or prosecution if

they have put themselves at risk as a result of committing a heroic act." He goes on to say: "Where an unfortunate incident occurs and an officer puts him or herself at risk in the line of their duty to protect the public, I take the view that it would not be in the public interest to take action and investigate under health and safety laws."

It sounds good on the face of it, but this could lead to our employers sending firefighters into a known risk without adequate training or equipment and not being held to account. Surely each occasion needs to be investigated to see if there is any way such "heroic acts" could be carried out in a more efficient and safe way?

Let's make this clear, it is not health and safety legislation that is restricting the work of fire fighters - it is the lack of training and equipment we require in order to carry out our work efficiently without unnecessary risk to lives. As Firefighter magazine put it recently "give us the tools and we'll do the job." We have lost 16 of our comrades over the past eight years as a direct result of firefighting. On top of that, how many have we lost through cancer and lung diseases as a result of their work? We don't know - these figures aren't recorded. And, incidentally, ill health is not a consideration of the Report.

CFOA has welcomed the recommendations and will work to put them in place. We now await upcoming cuts to the fire service budget, and while there is no indication Avon FRS want to go down this route, we may soon be attacked from another angle, and of course cuts to health and safety procedures will mean savings for Brigades' finances.

Together we do need to fight the cuts we face, but we also need to fight any cuts to our health, safety and welfare.

*BY John Maggs, Avon FBU H&S Coordinator*

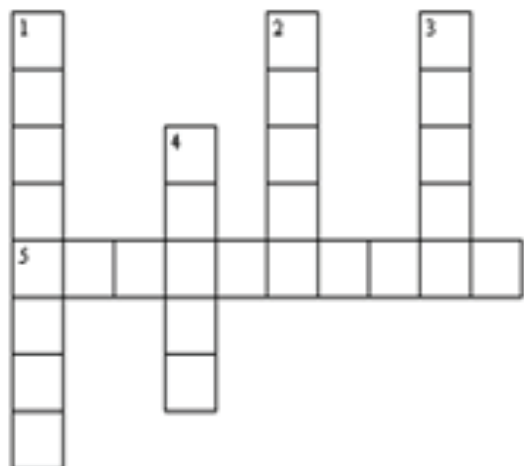




# No Brainer

## DOWN

- 1 Largest living land animal.
- 2 1941 Animated Disney film containing 1 down.
- 3 To squander.
- 4 Jimmy....., what a whirlwind.



## ACROSS

- 5 Locking has more than one for safe keeping.



The examples within this update are just a small snippet of some cuts that are happening around the country, but to be honest, we could look at every brigade and there is a story of threatened CUTS. We have to fight together to ensure our front line role is not compromised whilst other savings can be made. These are the largest attacks on the service we have ever faced. A more dangerous work place for us also means a more dangerous place for the public to live, travel and work in.

AVON FBU EXECUTIVE WILL WORK WITH AFRS MANAGEMENT AND THE FIRE AUTHORITY AS IS DEEMED APPROPRIATE BY ITS MEMBERS, AS WE HAVE DONE IN THE PAST WITH GREAT SUCCESS. WE WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO FIGHT AND SAVE FRONT LINE JOBS AND SERVICES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE SAFETY OF OUR MEMBERS AND THAT OF THE PUBLIC.

*AVON FBU EXECUTIVE*

**BATH BRANCH FBU PLACED A RESOLUTION TO THE BRIGADE COMMITTEE ON 5TH NOVEMBER 2010 WHICH WAS AGREED. THEREFORE THE RESOLUTION NOW READS:-**

**'AVON FBU WILL OPPOSE ANY CUTS IN FIRE COVER THAT TAKE PLACE IN AFRS AND WILL SUPPORT ANY INDUSTRIAL ACTION THAT IS DEEMED APPROPRIATE BY THE BRIGADE COMMITTEE IN THE REJECTION OF THESE CUTS.'**

**ALL BRANCHES NEED TO HAVE MEETINGS TO DISCUSS THE IMPENDING CUTS AND HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER IN ORDER TO DEFEND OUR JOBS AND THE SERVICE.**

# Our fire and rescue service is UNDER ATTACK



We face the most serious onslaught on our service in living memory:

- 25% cuts
- Pay freeze
- Attacks on pensions
- Thousands of jobs facing the axe
- Duty systems and conditions of service under threat
- Regionalisation of fire controls to proceed