



CAMPAIGN UPDATE IN DEVON AND SOMERSET FBU JUNE 2013

NEW FIRE AUTHORITY GET THE MESSAGE!

As new Fire Authority prepares to decide on cuts, FBU sends message to “think again on Fire Cuts”



The “No Fire Cuts” van at the entrance to Headquarters

The public consultation into the planned frontline cuts may have ended but the FBU campaign of opposition is still in full swing! Union Officials and members welcomed new Councillors to the first meeting of Devon & Somerset Fire Authority since the local elections by making sure they were left in no doubt that we are demanding NO CUTS in Fire Cover.

Union banners, flags and the special "battle van" were all set up at the front of the Service HQ to greet the Fire Authority as they arrived! FBU Members and Officials also attended the meeting and engaged with the Fire Authority members before and after the meeting to get our points across.

The £5.5M cuts package includes slashing **by half** emergency fire cover provided by full-time firefighters in Plymouth, Taunton and Torquay, and removing **all** full-time firefighters at Ilfracombe. Overall, 20% of all full-time firefighter posts in the whole of the DSFRS would be axed, in what are the worst cuts proposals ever to fire and rescue in Devon and Somerset.

The FBU has consistently warned that the cuts would increase emergency response times, compromise emergency cover and increase the risk to local communities and firefighters. Our campaign of opposition has seen over 25,000 members of the public sign a petition against the cuts and has achieved substantial political support at every level.

Our “Don’t Let Them Squeeze Your Fire Service Dry” adverts in local newspapers reached over 100,000 readers and local newspapers have run their own petitions against the cuts.

The FBU published our official response to the cuts and distributed it to every politician in Devon & Somerset. This report shows that since the two fire services merged in 2007 there has been a massive switch from the frontline to the backroom and consultants, with an extra 67 employed, and while the cost of firefighters has actually **fallen** by over £600k since 2007, the cost of support services has **increased** by over £4 million.”

The Fire Authority will meet on the 10th July to decide whether to proceed with the cuts and the FBU are asking as many members as possible to attend the meeting and demand that DSFRS think again on these flawed proposals. Despite concerns over the size of the venue the meeting is still scheduled to take place at Service Headquarters on Weds 10th of July. Members should aim to get there for 9am. Get there and tell Politicians: **No to Fire Cuts!**



Welcome to HQ!

Fighting for the Fire & Rescue Service



Protecting Firefighters & Control Staff

FBU CAMPAIGN KNOCKS CUTS FOR 6!



Torquay Members campaigning with Torbay Councillors

Since publishing our formal written response in April, the FBU has kept up a continuous campaign of political lobbying, at every level in politics, in order to get our points across. During the local elections we wrote to every candidate, in every constituency, who was standing for election. We raised the dangers of the proposals to the Fire & Rescue Service and asked all candidates to commit to removing the threat of cuts to the frontline.

After the election we made direct contact with every new member of the Fire Authority and made sure that they were given a hard copy of the FBU submission and were in no doubt of our opposition to the planned cuts. During this time we again made contact with local Members of Parliament informing them of the public reaction to our campaign and calling for their full support. At a local level FBU branches have achieved incredible levels of support from Town Councils, local Councillors and MPs. This led to the leader of Plymouth City Council, Tudor Evans, writing to the Fire Authority outlining “in the strongest possible terms” his opposition to the planned cuts and calling for the Authority to reconsider their plans. In Torquay local

councillors have thrown their full support behind the FBU with one campaigner even saying that the Fire Authority would have “blood on their hands” if the cuts go through!

In Taunton the campaign even resulted in a visit to the Fire Station from the Deputy Prime Minister who condemned the planned cuts to the Service!

Now, with the Fire Authority due to make a decision on the 10th July, we have once again written to every single member of the Fire Authority calling on them to reject these damaging proposals and think again. We have told Fire Authority members that the public reaction to the proposed cuts has been one of outrage and that it is clear that the the proposals do not have the necessary support from either the professionals who run the Service or the public who receive it. We have told them that it is the professional view of the FBU that the cuts will compromise public safety and, if consultation is to be meaningful, then the Fire Authority must reject these damaging proposals and demand a rethink.

Make sure you have your say - Get to the Fire Authority meeting on 10th July and tell them No Cuts to the Fire Service!



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