



FIRE BRIGADES UNION

SOUTH WEST REGION

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Dear Councillor

CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UNDERTAKING PART TIME WORK

I am writing to you on behalf of the Fire Brigades Union within Devon & Somerset to register our grave concern and seek an explanation in regard to the apparent decision of the Devon & Somerset Fire Authority to grant permission for the current Chief Fire Officer to undertake part time work on behalf of the Welsh Government.

It was only a matter of weeks ago when the Fire Authority passed a series of votes regarding the implementation of unprecedented cuts to the frontline of Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, on the advice of the Chief Fire Officer. This decision created enormous concern amongst staff and yet, even before formal discussions have begun regarding the consequences of this decision, the Fire Authority has given permission for the Chief Fire Officer to undertake a part time role in an entirely separate, devolved administration. Following the breaking of this news via the media, I wish to register our strongly held view that the Firefighters and public of Devon & Somerset deserve and require a full time Chief Fire Officer, not a part time, ad hoc arrangement. This is especially the case at this crucial and in many ways unprecedented, period in time for our Service and the people within it.

At this time of unprecedented cuts and challenges, with even further Government spending cuts in the pipeline, with deep staff concern and very low morale, with ongoing issues regarding combination, with senior and principal officers having just taken redundancy, and with the potential for conflicts of interest; it seems to the FBU and our members that the decision to grant permission for the Chief Fire Officer to undertake part time work is outrageous, wrong and a kick in the teeth for the hard working and committed staff of Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service.

Further, for staff to find out via the media shows a contemptuous disregard for industrial relations and a lack of commitment towards an open and transparent culture. I am writing to you to register the deeply held concern of the FBU and seek your understanding of this arrangement including when the decision was made and all other matters relating to it.

Please feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss this request further.

Yours sincerely

TREVOR FRENCH
DEVON & SOMERSET BRIGADE SECRETARY

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