

Date: 28th February 2008

ALL MEMBERS

JMU Staff Perceptions Survey

Dear Brother/Sister

As members will recall in January 2007 Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service commissioned Liverpool John Moores University to undertake a survey of all employees, this survey took the form of a questionnaire that was distributed in March 2007.

The Questions, for the survey were developed surrounding value related issues; perspectives on processes surrounding industrial relations; how issues are dealt with in the service; management issues; workforce issues; ways by which the service can go forward; possible contributions to forward development and possible ways to improve industrial relations. As the survey was open to all 1740 employees of the Service and a 33% response rate was achieved JMU deemed it

‘....an excellent response for such a survey’

JMU further added that the outcomes provide

‘..... for a robust reliable data set that yields statistically significant findings.’

The JMU survey made for worrying reading with employees indicating that they where **dissatisfied** with the following value related issues of the Service-

- Trust - 65.5%
- Loyalty - 70.6%
- Respect - 69.9%
- Honesty - 66%
- Accountability - 60.9%
- Genuineness - 68.8%
- Support from management - 69.3%
- Possible hidden Agendas - 73.8%
- Staff being valued - 74.9%
- Impartial assessment of Industrial relations problems - 62.8%

The JMU Executive summary further stated-

'In the case of ALL value measures they are perceived to be of low satisfaction. Transparency yields the lowest satisfaction followed by respect then honesty and trust. Each of these values is also perceived as low importance. Although community and equality are also perceived with low satisfaction, they differ in that they are both perceived as high importance. Ideally the desired position for all of these values is perceptions of high importance and high satisfaction.'

Respondents views in the 'Perceptions and Attitudes' section of the survey indicated that they **disagreed** that-

- There is mutual respect amongst different roles - 81.1%
- Teamwork has improved across the Service - 69.3%

Respondents **agreed** that-

- Building trust can only happen in the long term- 72.7%

The JMU survey was also constructive in identifying opinions on how specific areas are addressed or dealt with in the service, respondents indicated the following examples to be dealt with **poorly**-

- Management perceptions of workforce needs - 73.4%
- Current Industrial Relations atmosphere - 86.1%
- Promotion prospects - 68.2%
- Individual views taken seriously - 70.7%

Employees **disagreed** with the following statements concerning the Workforce in the Service-

- There is fairness of treatment across different roles in the Service - 74.8%
- Views of staff are taken seriously - 70.4%
- There is a free flow of information up and down the role structures - 67.1%
- Management present a positive attitude - 62.7%
- Recruitment processes seem to be right - 70.5%
- Working practises ensure a positive attitude is maintained - 73.1%

Employees **agreed**-

- Causes of dissatisfaction are well known - 65.7%

The final section of the survey and possibly the most important for the FBU and MF&RS dealt with suggestions as to what employees think will be a suitable approach to improve Industrial Relations in the Service, respondents **agreed** suitable approaches to be-

- Improved two-way communication up and down the structures within the service - 84.8%

- Explicit moves to remove a ‘them’ and ‘us’ culture (management and workforce) – 81.6%
- Explicit moves to remove a ‘them’ and ‘us’ culture (union and non-union) – 62%

The first of the recommendations from that report was-

1) (a) That Members note this reports satisfaction position, and that this is used as a datum point for a preferred direction of travel.

(b) That a further satisfaction questionnaire be used in the future to establish changes in satisfaction resulting from initiatives.

As we are approaching a year since the last survey the FBU hope that MF&RS will take this opportunity to conduct a further survey to serve as an indicator that initiatives put in place, as a result of the first JMU survey recommendations, are working and that progress is being made on the issues raised.

Yours in Unity

Mark Rowe
Assistant Brigade Secretary