

Date: Friday, 18 April 2008

ALL MEMBERS

LLAR - BELLE VALE AND ALLERTON

Dear Brother/Sister,

Members may be aware of campaigns running in the Belle Vale and Allerton area in order to keep those stations wholetime. The Union has been made aware of a letter from MF&RS that is being circulated and that purports to state that there is no intention to make any changes to the level of fire cover in Belle Vale and that there are no cuts whatsoever to the communities of Belle Vale and Allerton.

Firstly, the FBU have made it known constantly to fire authority councillors and senior managers that the fire stations at Belle Vale and Allerton do not meet the required criteria for LLAR working, that is the reason why the FBU and MF&RS are meeting in London with senior national fire service negotiators to try and resolve this dispute between us. The FBU firmly believe that the fire stations at Belle Vale and Allerton are too busy to be downgraded from wholetime 24/7 stations, to LLAR fire stations in this manner.

Secondly, the Union cannot stress enough that of course these are cuts; introduction of LLAR at those stations will see the loss of 24 firefighter's posts, with the remaining firefighters working 96 hours in a week to cover the loss of those posts. Those remaining firefighters will be living away from the fire stations at night, the time of most fire deaths, with the firefighter's residences being up to 1.9 minutes away from the fire station. Any professional firefighter will tell you that an increase of 1.9 minutes for a fire appliance to attend an emergency incident increases the likelihood of the fire being more developed and of course the Union believe that to be an increase of the risk to us and our members of our communities.

As the FBU stated in the public fire authority meeting of the 22nd January 2008 where the fire authority narrowly voted to accept LLAR at Allerton and Belle Vale and to which we believe was recorded and available on transcript, the management position that implementing LLAR at wholetime 24/7 fire stations is not a downgrading of the fire service in those areas is a myth. Communities who have an LLAR fire station have a slower (up to 1.9 minutes slower) responding fire appliance at night, than they did when the fire station was a wholetime 24/7 station, the FBU believe that is undeniable.

It is true that the FBU have agreed that LLAR working can proceed at West Kirby, Heswall, Formby and Newton le Willows, as long as the amount of fire calls in those areas are closely monitored with a return to the wholetime 24/7 system if they become too busy (more than 825 emergency incidents in a year), the FBU have not agreed that LLAR can be worked at Belle Vale and Allerton and that is the reason for this crucial London meeting of the 22nd April 2008.

Yours in unity

L Skarratts
Brigade Secretary