

Date: Wednesday, 11 June 2008

## **ALL MEMBERS**

### **MAKE UP OF MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Dear Brother/Sister,

Members may have learnt from press reports of the changes to the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority including the Conservative decision to replace Cllr Les Byrom on the Authority with Tory Cllr M Barber. It appears likely now that the makeup of the fire authority will be 7 Lib Dem councillors, 6 Labour councillors and 5 Tory councillors, the first time that Labour have fell away from being the biggest party.

Members may also now be aware that Cllr Les Byrom, after losing his appointment on the MF&RA and consequently his senior and influential position on the NJC has defected across the floor of Sefton Council and applied to join the Labour Party. In real political terms I think many would agree that this defection is nothing short of astonishing.

Cllr Byrom's letter of resignation to Conservative leader David Cameron is attached for your attention and information and I would draw your attention to the advice Bro Byrom gives David Cameron in that he would be well advised to learn from Thatcher, it is not often you hear Labour politicians take that political position given the vicious 11 years she was in power but this clearly is not a usual political gambit.

Yours in unity

L Skarratts  
Brigade Secretary

## **Les Byrom's resignation letter**

Dear David

I am writing to you to inform you of my decision to resign from the Conservative Party.

As you know, I have been a long-standing servant of the Conservative Party for many years, having joined its ranks under Ted Heath and gone through my political apprenticeship within the party in the mid-80s under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher.

However, I have become concerned in recent months at what increasingly seems like an unprincipled approach to policy-making, determined less by what is right for the country than what will produce the maximum short-term partisan advantage.

No matter where Lady Thatcher stood in the polls, she always sought to do what was right rather than what was politically expedient, and this is a lesson you would be well advised to learn.

Nowhere is this issue more stark than in the current debate about pre-charge detention. My experience of working with the emergency services has instilled in me a strong belief that there are some issues, such as national security, that come before party politics and on which politicians of all shades should work together.

I have watched as the Government has genuinely sought to create a principled consensus on a matter which concerns the protection of the British people. Yet our party appears to have played no part in this process and has seemed to put political interest before the national interest.

For me, this has become typical of a general approach to the serious issues our nation faces and it is one I can no longer support. Having worked closely with this Government on issues of public safety I have decided they are the only party that is prepared to properly support the emergency services and so I will be applying to join the Labour Party and seeking to take up the Labour whip. Given the importance of the debate on pre-charge detention in the House of Commons today, I will be releasing this letter to the media.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Leslie Byrom