

Date: Thursday, 31 August 2006

ALL MEMBERS

Dear Brother/Sister,

The Policy and Finance Committee yesterday agreed the attached report CFO/163/05 'Embedding Excellence' (attached) which you will note that the recommendation, specifically recommendation (b) of the report states that the Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority (MF&CDA) declares:

'In the interests of clarity, confirm and reassure employees that they will not suffer any detriment with regard to appointments for promotion on the grounds of participation in trade union activities.'

Whilst those words are indeed welcome and overdue and as a result of the FBU requesting the commitment in the last meeting we had with the elected members, it is also a statutory requirement. It is unlawful to act outwith recommendation (b) and indeed there are not many employers that would declare that employees would suffer detriment with regard to appointments for promotion on the grounds of participation in trade union activities, and certainly not in the UK Fire Service.

The recommendation also stands contrary to the email from the chief fire officer of the 24th August 2006, entitled 'concerns about career progression' which makes the following very strong statements:

'It is simply a fact that taking part in industrial action does not provide positive evidence of these qualities (commitment to development, diversity and excellence). If an individual demonstrates contrary evidence, such as taking part in a strike, then I would not regard this action as supportive evidence of the above characteristics, and it would add value or weight to an application for career advancement as a leader of the future.'

'The benchmark of good leadership has always been raised by the fantastic response of current service leaders to ensuring our communities will still receive a professional response during strike periods.' It will always be remembered that most of the MF&RS senior and principal management team have taken strike action in the past, be it 1977/78 or at a later time, it appears then that the chief fire officer has little confidence in the leadership qualities of the vast majority of his serving senior and principal managers, nobody it seems, are safe.

'Any aspiring leader, who fully supports this strike action, will have to provide alternative significant and compelling evidence of their leadership and commitment to our values.' The question must be asked is why the chief fire officer questions the leadership

qualities of any member who supports this strike action, surely he means any strike action or is there a more defined agenda.

Recommendation (b) is empty without reinforcing it with commitment. Our members have reported unwelcome approaches from senior managers, the councillors must now take action, even if it is to agree to the independent inquiry into industrial relations which the TUC have agreed to conduct which they haven't as yet. The FBU ask, what have they to hide.

Yours in unity

L Skarratts
Brigade Secretary