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**FIRE BRIGADES UNION**  
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TO: ALL MEMBERS

Dear Brother/Sister,

**MERSEYSIDE FIRE DISPUTE : STRIKE SUSPENDED - FOR NOW**

All members are closely watching the developments in the Merseyside Fire Dispute and I provide here an update on the current situation. Following agreement between the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority and the Merseyside FBU Brigade Committee, strike action was suspended on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2006. At the moment the agreement is a set of agreed principles. There is still a body of work to be completed between both sides to ensure that fire service management do not renege on the points of any settlement. The trade dispute therefore still exists in Merseyside.

The four central issues of the trade dispute itself have been addressed within the Principles of Agreement.

- The demand that management implement, in full, the recommendation of the Technical Advisory Panel is met, subject of course to the implementation of the terms of the principles of the agreement;
- The appliances which were proposed to be downgraded from wholetime 24/7 to retained have now been maintained as 24/7 appliances, albeit some will be the subject of a future review;
- Cuts to establishment in the emergency fire control room have been minimized with no compulsory redundancies;
- The principle that work undertaken by uniformed personnel over and above the normal working week will be paid at premium rate has been agreed.

A principled agreement has been reached that the fire authority will work toward a 5 and 4 ridership level on 75% of occasions and will schedule recruitment to achieve that level. This is a marked improvement on the fire authority's current policy of 4 and 4 being sufficient.

Perhaps most timely of all is the agreement to review Industrial Relations in Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service including referral to an independent third party if required.

Merseyside members await the outcome of the 21 day period which has been set aside for the continued negotiations to take place around the principles. At the time of writing reports have been received in Head Office that this emerging agreement appears to be in jeopardy as a result of management threatening to renege on the principled agreement that had been reached on the TAP recommendations. The arrogant, swagger-stick approach to employee relations which has permeated the senior management for the last few years in Merseyside is reported to be unabated leading to real anger on the branches.

Head Office officials are in discussion with local officials on the situation and the question as to when the strike committee will be re-called. Members will be informed of any developments.

Best wishes,

Yours fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Dark', with a stylized, cursive script.

ANDY DARK  
ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY