

# FIRE BRIGADES UNION

## HUMBERSIDE FIRE CREWS TO BALLOT FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION SHORT OF A STRIKE OVER IMPOSITION OF CHANGES AND LACK OF NEGOTIATION

Humberside fire crews are to hold a ballot for industrial action over plans to push through changes without negotiation or agreement. Humberside managers have refused to seek assistance in seeking an agreement through a joint national employers and union team, part of the national agreement they signed up to.

The changes by-pass national agreements by introducing, for example, a new “Community Fire Technician” grade on lower pay. The fire authority had been given 7 day’s notice to withdraw the plans and to negotiate by Thursday 26 March but they declined.

The formal 7 day’s notice of the intention to hold a ballot has been given by the national union to the secretary of the fire authority, which is what is required under law.

There are very tight legal rules involving notification to the employer and detailed and drawn out timescales before any industrial action can take place. The earliest date any action could take place is in early May.

Ian Murray of Humberside FBU said: “Humberside firefighters feel they are being treated with contempt. If the fire authority wants changes it needs to consult and negotiate like any other employer.

“We have told the fire authority they are obliged to negotiate and they refuse to do so. Humberside firefighters will not be treated in this way and the only avenue open to us at this stage is to start a ballot for industrial action.

“We regret even having to start the ballot process but the fire authority has taken the road of confrontation by refusing to negotiate. Consulting is not enough, there needs to be negotiation and agreement.

“In a compromise move, we have requested the fire authority to seek the help of the joint national employers and union team which assists in these circumstances. They have refused that request and appear to prefer confrontation.

“This ballot is taking place because Humberside firefighters have demanded it. The fire authority and managers should be in no doubt at the strength of feeling about this issue.”

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