

# FIRE BRIGADES UNION

13 August 2009

**Essex Fire Talks aimed at resolving the dispute over frontline cuts resume today (Thursday 13th August) at 2 pm.**

The talks follow the emphatic 8 out of 10 ballot result on 31st July for industrial action that shows the strength of professional opposition to the current cuts plans.

The union decided to withhold calling immediate action to give the fire authority this opportunity to negotiate an acceptable solution and avoid industrial action. The balloting laws require the union to commence action within 28 days of the result - which means today's talks are pivotal.

Keith Flynn, Essex FBU Brigade Chair (and Basildon firefighter):

"Essex fire crews have absolutely no confidence in the fire authority's misguided plans to cut life-saving resources from the frontline 999 service - and when the frontline professionals are seriously worried then so the public and the councillors who represent them should be worried too.

So far our concerns have fallen on deaf ears but now with the ballot result proving the strength of feeling of the frontline professionals we hope that the fire authority representatives we meet today will be both willing and empowered to begin meaningful negotiations."

The last meeting between the two sides took place before the ballot result was known was ended abruptly by the chief fire officer within minutes of it starting.

Mick Rogers, Essex FBU (and Colchester firefighter):

"The fire authority want to spend an extra £5 million on the IT budget in the next 3 years. This is a massive increase when they are attacking the frontline 999 emergency service.

"They also want to buy a helicopter. The authority clearly has the money but is choosing not to spend it where it is needed most - frontline services.

"These cuts are not necessary. The authority has a choice".

Reps from fire stations across the county will meet on Monday 17th August to review the success or not of today's talks.

\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*

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