

# FIRE BRIGADES UNION

MEDIA RELEASE: August 26 2009

## **FIREFIGHTERS REBUT MERSEYSIDE CHIEF'S CLAIMS**

Claims by Merseyside's chief fire officer Tony McGuirk about plans by the Fire Brigades Union to hold a strike ballot are described by local FBU leaders as 'clumsy attempts to distort the true picture of what's happening to the fire service'.

FBU members will begin a strike ballot next week in the continuing dispute over the victimisation of the union's Merseyside vice-chair Kevin Hughes, who has been sacked by the fire authority.

A circular to firefighters from Mr McGuirk claimed that they would be asked to vote for continuous strike action, adding that it is 'important to note that'.

"It's important, all right," says FBU Merseyside brigade chair Mark Dunne, "because it is not true. We have made it clear all along that if our members were asked to vote on strike action, it would be discontinuous strike action. The fact that the chief fire officer claims otherwise is a worrying indication that he has an agenda of his own, rather than seeking to resolve our dispute.

"We are also deeply concerned that he yesterday took four fire appliances out of frontline service for 'training purposes' in anticipation of a strike. The place for those appliances is in frontline service, where they are needed by firefighters and the public.

"Mr McGuirk owes it to firefighters on Merseyside to issue a full apology for his misleading statements."

Ends

Further information: Mark Dunne 07834 656089