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FIRE BRIGADES UNION
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TO: ALL MEMBERS

Dear Brother/Sister

PROVISIONAL FIRE SERVICE GRANT SETTLEMENT IN ENGLAND

You have already received our submission to the Department for Communities and Local Government regarding the provisional grant settlement. The late announcement of the actual figures coupled with the festive break and the tight deadline for responses meant we could only do a substantive response on the figures for England.

On 10th January, myself, Assistant General Secretary Andy Dark and President Mick Shaw met with John Healey MP, Minister of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government. Mr Healey and his officials had read our submission and agreed to meet us at short notice.

I am aware that local Councillors and Chief Officers representing a number of Brigades have made representations and had meetings with Ministers. I am also aware that some of you may have attended those meetings yourselves or made other representations to Ministers or MPs.

At our meeting I outlined the Union's views expressed in our submissions about the settlement overall and that our general points applied to *all* parts of the UK. We underlined the FBU's view that:

- this level of settlement will mean some Brigades will struggle to maintain levels of service over the next three years;
- the very wide variations between Brigades and between types of Brigades appeared to have little logic behind them;
- there was little or no revenue support for the enormous amount of additional and entirely new work taken on by the Service, nor of the extra statutory duties;

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- we were unconvinced that enough regard is being taken of risk being faced by Brigades, in particular New Dimensions risks and the extraordinarily high industrial risks in Brigades such as Cleveland;
- the lack of proper revenue support meant there is a no incentive to take on any additional work unless it was fully funded;
- there was a real danger that Fire and Rescue Services would retreat back into carrying out work at a level which only ensured that statutory duties were being met;
- Firefighter deaths had hit a 30-year high;
- commercial and business fire losses had peaked in five out of the last six years;
- the last year - 2007 - had been the first one free of industrial action since the national dispute but that would be undermined by this settlement.

Mr Healey outlined the Government's position on the settlement saying that CLG felt it was a tough settlement but one which was broadly fair. He could not be more specific on the Government's views on a capping regime.

At the end of the process, CLG would make its final announcement after it had considered all of the views put to it as part of the consultation process. He said the formula would be looked at in the run up to the next spending review and the Union's views would be valued as part of that review.

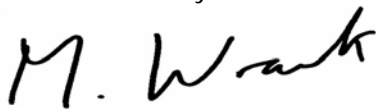
He confirmed that the existing framework for efficiency savings would remain.

We will have to wait and see what impact the various lobbying activities will have. Our role was to ensure that, as the only UK-wide voice in the Fire Service, we made our views clear in a way which broadly supported the efforts of others who were doing the same on a local level.

Local officials will be closely monitoring the impact of this spending review on local budgets and the implications for our Service.

Best wishes.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack', written in a cursive style.

**MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY**

MW/sll