

Thursday August 4 2005 No.63

SUFFOLK FIRE AUTHORITY MISLEADING PUBLIC OVER CUTS



**Union also questions
commitment to prevention
and community safety**

Suffolk FBU has accused the county council of misleading the public over fire service cuts.

Although the council has now admitted that they are indeed axing 12 firefighters from the 999 frontline service, the council's claims that 9 of the jobs will be switched to prevention work is untrue.

The fact is that only six posts will be switched to "desk-jobs" and not the nine repeatedly claimed by the council. These six posts will only have swivel chairs to sit on rather than fire engines.

**Support Suffolk
FBU members!**

**National
Demonstration
11 August 2005
1400 - 1600
Ipswich, Suffolk**

Contact your local FBU official
for travel arrangements

Messages/resolutions of support
for Suffolk members can be
emailed to Suffolk brigade chair,
[Vince Jell,](mailto:vinceatthejells@hotmail.com)
(vinceatthejells@hotmail.com)

The other three "jobs" claimed do not in fact exist. The truth is that they intend the additional work of three firefighters to be given to existing staff to do on a short-term, part-time basis on top of their normal 42-hour week.

The Union also questioned the council's commitment to prevention and community safety which is used as a justification for the planned cuts. Prevention inspections have been slashed and spending on community safety cut by two-thirds in recent years.

Council have to come clean

Suffolk FBU brigade secretary Vince Jell said:

"The council have to come clean and admit they are only switching 6 of the jobs. The other three jobs do not actually exist, it is simply a paper exercise requiring our members to take on the extra work of three invisible firefighters.

"Axing the 12 frontline posts means they don't commit new money to prevention or community safety. It's a half-measure to fill in for previous cuts in prevention and community safety - a half-measure at the expense of the frontline 999 service."

"This is not about change or modernisation it is about old fashioned cuts in council services. These cuts make our work less safe and the public less safe and they have to stop."

First strike solid, members preparing for Friday's strike

FBU members in Suffolk went on strike between 0700 and 1000 hours Tuesday August 2 in a solid show of strength.

The 3 hour strike will be followed by a two-hour strike on Friday 5 August (1700-1900 hours); a three-hour strike on Monday, 8 August (0700-1000 hours) and a two-hour strike on Thursday, 11 August (1600-1900 hours).

Somerset members suspend industrial action to allow month of detailed work on insurance problems

Somerset fire crews have suspended industrial action which was due to start on 4 August in a dispute over insurance cover. The decision to suspend the action was taken after consultation with FBU Somerset members following a meeting with fire and rescue service managers Tuesday afternoon.

The Union and Somerset fire and rescue service have set up a joint working party to investigate details of the personal insurance provision of Somerset fire service personnel.

Some personal insurance policies - such as mortgage protection policies and life insurance - will not pay up if a firefighter is killed or injured while responding to a terrorist incident.

The group will report back to a joint meeting no later than 2

September which will aim to reach an agreement.

The industrial action will be suspended until this joint meeting.

No new ND training until joint working party reports back to 2 September meeting

Somerset fire and rescue service have agreed not to begin any new training on Incident Response Units and High Volume Pumping units.

Operational staff will continue to respond to all emergency calls as normal during this time.

FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack who attended the meeting said:

"A joint working party has been set up to assess the problem in Somerset and look at possible solutions. The aim is to help reach a solution acceptable to Somerset FBU members.

"If after further discussions no acceptable solution is reached then our ballot is still valid and legal. Somerset members have suspended the action, but it is still very much an option for the future if necessary."

Somerset members want employers to address very real concerns

Adrian Woollaston, Somerset FBU secretary said:

"The decision to suspend the action was taken after consultation with members following a meeting with the fire and rescue service. Somerset fire crews want our

employers to address our very real concerns and this gives an opportunity for them to do so.

If solution unsatisfactory, industrial action option open

"We want to reach a satisfactory solution. If further talks do not reach a satisfactory solution then the option of starting industrial action short of a strike remains.

"It is important to us for the public to know that we have taken all reasonable steps to resolve this issue before embarking on a course of industrial action. Any action would not be a strike and the public would still get a fire engine when they called 999 for help."


Unison calls on insurers to protect the people protecting the public

UNISON, the UK's ambulance union, has today called it a disgrace that some personal insurance policies would not pay out to families of emergency workers killed or injured dealing with a terrorist incident.

The union is calling on those companies to drop exclusion clauses and offer comprehensive protection to emergency personnel who put their lives on the line to protect the public and care for the injured.

Sam Oestreicher, UNISON national officer for ambulance staff said:

"All ambulance trusts must train at least 10% of their crews to deal with chemical, biological,



radiological and nuclear emergencies. At this time of heightened security, we should all be grateful that staff volunteer to undertake this training.

"That is why it is so shocking to learn that some insurance companies would leave emergency workers and their families high and dry, if they were injured or killed dealing with this type of emergency.

Unison: 03/08/2005

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