

THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

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STATION CUTS AND CLOSURES WILL COMPROMISE PUBLIC AND FIREFIGHTER SAFETY WARN HUMBERSIDE FIRE CREWS

Humberside fire crews are warning that cuts and station closures will compromise public and firefighter safety. The warning came as local fire crews launch their campaign to stop the most savage cuts ever proposed in the fire service in Humberside.

The cuts are being proposed because Humberside Fire and Rescue Authority want to make budget cuts of £4 million over the next three years. This is despite the authority getting far more money than it expected from central Government to help pay for the fire and rescue service.

There are plans to close 4 fire stations (Sledmere, Waltham, Kirton Lindsey and Hull Central) remove a fire engine at another (Immingham West) and end the immediate response capability of a fire engine at another (Goole). As fire appliances can attend, assist, support and provide cover well outside their station areas, these cuts will have an impact across Humberside.

Local fire crews estimate the cuts will see the loss of 1 in ten frontline firefighter posts. If the plans go ahead we would have between 100 and 110 fewer frontline firefighters to deal with all the emergency incidents the fire and rescue service needs to respond to.

Ian Murray, Humberside FBU spokesman said: "These are the most savage cuts ever proposed in the fire service in Humberside. These cuts will harm our ability to respond to all the types of emergency incidents we now attend.

"The 'fire' service is now an all-round community rescue service with an enormous range of rescue responsibilities. These cuts and closures will mean fewer firefighters taking longer to get to all 999 incidents, not only fires.

"The closure of Sledmere, Waltham, Kirton Lindsay and Hull Central stations and cuts at Immingham West and Goole will clearly compromise safety in those areas. But safety will also be compromised in those areas which rely on these stations for rapid back up and support.

"With those closures and cuts that back up will take longer to arrive which will affect our ability to do our jobs at emergency incidents. This will clearly compromise public safety and our safety.

"Firefighters could be left in the impossible position at 999 incidents of either waiting until a safe number of firefighters arrive and risking the lives of the public, or ignoring basic safety procedures and risking our own lives. Councillors or senior managers will not be at the scene when we are faced with those hard, real questions and the deadly dilemma we will be placed in as rescuers.

"Local fire crews have legitimate concerns and strong views about these issues. We are the professionals who understand the daily reality of the job we do and we will campaign to defend the service we committed ourselves to when we joined."

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