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TO: **ALL MEMBERS**

Consultative ballot on pay and conditions

The FBU has received a proposal from the fire service employers on pay and conditions. Their letter and accompanying document can be read in full on the FBU website:

<https://www.fbu.org.uk/publication/employers-pay-proposal>

N.B. The employers' document is titled 'National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services.' Please note that this is **not** an NJC document since any such document must be agreed by **both** sides of the NJC (employer and employee). It is simply an employers' document; a proposal from the employers.

The Executive Council considered this proposal at a meeting on 5 March. As a result the Executive Council has agreed to ballot all FBU members on the proposal through a consultative ballot.

- All FBU members will therefore shortly receive a ballot paper.
- The ballot will consist of two questions.
- There will be a secure provision to vote online.
- The ballot closes on 8 April.

The need for the ballot

The Executive Council is very clear that the proposal from the employers is completely unacceptable for a variety of reasons. These reasons have already been made very clear to the employers by our negotiators but the employers have made their proposal despite this. It is therefore now essential that FBU members as a whole send a strong message to our employers and to government ministers – that the employers' proposal is not acceptable. The FBU is a democratic organisation and this discussion affects the future of every single union member. That is why all FBU members are being asked to vote in this consultative ballot.

Further information on the issues

Further information relating to the ballot will be issued in coming days. This will include a circular to members at home, videos and other updates. These will all be available through the FBU website and will be sent out via the FBU electronic bulletin – Rollcall. Please also be aware that all brigades and regions have been asked to arrange briefing meetings where further detail will be provided and where questions can be addressed.

Vote YES – to reject the employers' free-for-all flexible contracts

There are two questions on the consultative ballot paper. In both of these, we are asking members to support the Union's position and send a strong message to our employers and government that this proposal is not acceptable and to get back to the negotiating table to develop a serious, professional and sustainable pay proposal for FBU members.

There are many reasons why this proposal should be rejected. (These will be explained in further detail in subsequent communications.)

These include:

- The percentage pay figures in the employers' document do **NOT** constitute a pay offer. They are hypothetical figures reliant on unconfirmed government funding.
- The figures do not, in any case, address the pay concerns of FBU members.
- The list of activities set out is an employers' list. It is not a jointly agreed list.

Regardless of these matters, on which there may be a range of views, the employers propose that their lists of proposed activities are 'non-exhaustive'. **This would mean the introduction of an entirely open-ended contract where work activity would be determined unilaterally by the employer without agreement and without negotiation.** The Executive Council was unanimous that on this issue alone, and without even considering other concerns, the employers' proposal should be rejected.

Vote YES – to build our campaign and make the case for funding of our service, including pay

You will be well aware that funding for the fire & rescue service has been subject to devastating cuts. To improve this situation will require investment from government/s. The FBU has therefore engaged with the employers in seeking to make the case to central government for the funding necessary to improve the situation, including addressing the issue of pay. This includes looking at the issue of work roles – but this has to be done by negotiation rather than by imposition. It is clear that on the employers' side there are those, including Chief Fire Officers, who want a local free-for-all and a race to the bottom. Our strategy, agreed and reaffirmed by FBU conference, seeks to ensure that these discussions take place nationally, through the NJC.

- Please attend your local meeting
- Please follow updates through the FBU website
- Please ensure you vote in the ballot
- Please vote **YES** to both questions

Yours in Unity,



Matt Wrack
General Secretary