



The Premier Trade Union for Professional Firefighters and Emergency Fire Control Staff: Oct 2014

## ***LISTEN TO FIREFIGHTERS!***

***FBU puts marker down over “funding crisis” as merger consultation closes***



The FBU in Dorset and Wiltshire have put a marker down by telling politicians that they ***“will not pay for cuts with our jobs, our service and the safety of firefighters and the public”***. The statement comes as the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) publishes its response to a public consultation considering a merger of the two Fire & Rescues Services.

The consultation, being run separately by the Fire Authorities in Dorset and Wiltshire, opened in July and has put forward a number of options, foremost a merger of the two Services. The plan has been made in response to funding cuts which have left both Fire Services on the brink of what some officers are describing as ***“insolvency”***.

In response, the FBU in Dorset and Wiltshire have published submissions which outline the strain that cuts are putting on staff and demand ***“long term, strategic investment in the service”***.

FBU Brigade Secretary in Dorset, Karen Adams, said ***“these are desperate times for Dorset Fire and Rescue Service. Funding cuts are already having a serious impact on our Service, with Firefighters expected to work in their own time, and on low pay rates, just to keep fire engines on the run and support community safety events.***

***“But enough is enough: no matter the outcome of the consultation we are demanding long term, strategic investment in our service. We require, and the public deserve, a properly financed, locally accountable Fire and Rescue Service – no matter which name it bears”***

Brent Thorley, FBU Brigade Secretary in Wiltshire demanded that politicians listen to the view of professional Firefighters, saying ***“The only reason that this consultation is taking place is because of massive funding cuts in Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service. Although the majority of these cuts have been driven by central Government, decisions taken by local politicians have made the situation even worse.***

***“For purely political reasons, and against the advice of professional Firefighters, they have implemented a series of Council Tax freezes which have put emergency cover at risk. It’s a shocking truth that the purpose of this consultation isn’t about improving emergency cover or community safety – rather its about the survival of the Fire and Rescue Service itself.”***

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***Fighting for the Fire & Rescue Service***

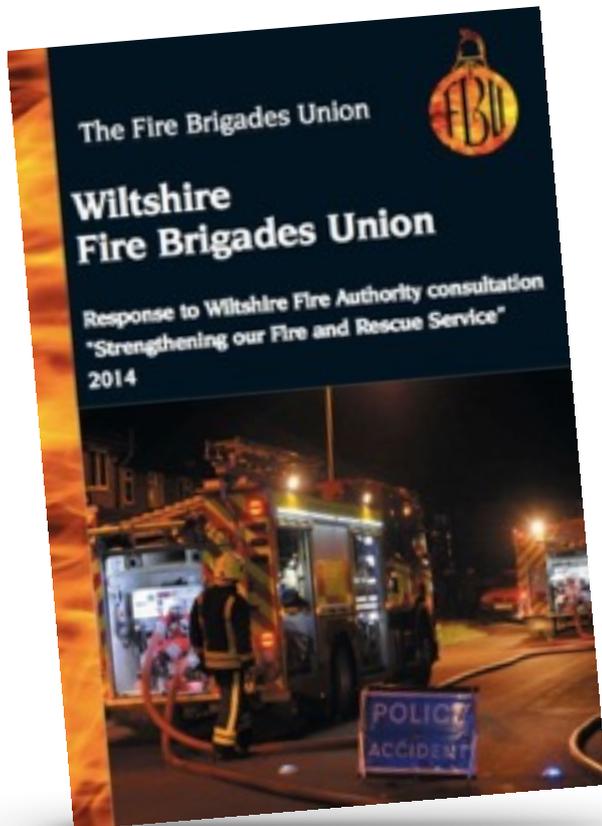


***Protecting Firefighters & Control Staff***

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## ***FBU respond to Wiltshire & Dorset combination plans***

The FBU has submitted formal and comprehensive responses to the public consultation being run by Dorset and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authorities regarding the future of the service.



Because the consultation was run separately in Dorset and Wiltshire, the Union has responded by sending in two submissions - one to each Authority. The submissions, which were developed and agreed by the local FBU Brigade Committees, each deal with local issues, but within the same framework and with the same overall message - a demand for investment to protect the frontline service.

The submissions outline the serious effect that funding cuts are having on our service and the expectation being put on the goodwill of firefighters to work in their own time in order to provide emergency cover and support community safety events. There is also an increasing expectation for firefighters to work additional hours on a flat rate of pay, outside national pay agreements, showing that "goodwill" is rapidly becoming a "one way street", with firefighters doing all the giving and local employers doing the taking.

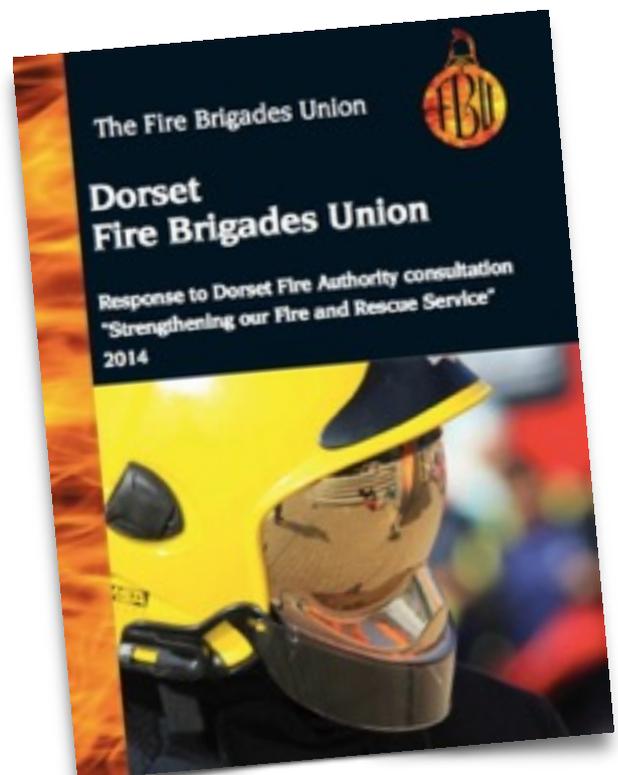
The submissions, which can be found on our website: [www.southwestfbu.com](http://www.southwestfbu.com) set out a series of requirements and expectations for the future of our service and the people who work within it. They are detailed and comprehensive, each containing a series of points and recommendations, together with a position statement from the FBU.

The documents have been submitted to the consultation and a copy has been sent to each member of the Fire Authority. The Union has also published them on our website and a hard copy of each document will be sent to every branch in Dorset and Wiltshire.

Regional Secretary Trevor French said "Our service has suffered unprecedented and dangerous cuts to central funding in the last decade. Nationally, central funding to the Fire and Rescue Service has been cut by more than a fifth during this parliament and further cuts are planned for 2015-16, an unprecedented reduction. These cuts will ultimately cost lives, destroy homes and businesses, drive up insurance premiums and damage the environment.

"Politicians at a local and national level have betrayed Firefighters and the Fire & Rescue Service. They have been so focussed on driving through funding cuts that they have been blinded to the impact these have on the frontline emergency service. Politically driven cuts have created a financial crisis in our service so dangerous that in a recent TV interview the Wiltshire Chief Fire Officer told a reporter that the Brigade was in danger of "going bust".

"Now the FBU is putting a marker down: We will not pay for political cuts with our jobs, our service and the safety of firefighters and the public."



## Firefighters support Paramedics in fight for fair pay!



South West FBU members supported colleagues in the South West Ambulance Service as they took part in strike action to fight for fair pay in the NHS.

The strike, on Monday 13th October, was the first time for over 30 years that health workers have taken action and FBU reps joined them on picket

lines throughout the Region to give our solidarity and support.

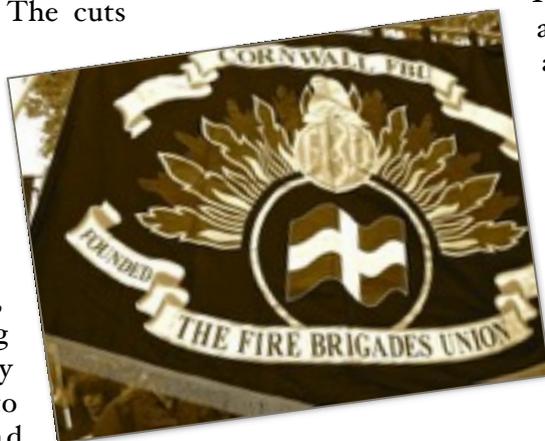
The Paramedics and health workers had very active picket lines and fantastic public support in their campaign and have thanked everyone in the FBU for the support that was given.

Unity is Strength!

## Cornish Firefighters slam “dangerous”

Firefighters in Cornwall have slammed proposed budgets cuts which they say will compromise cover and put public safety at risk. The cuts have been put forward by Cornwall County Council as part of plans to slash £196m from the budget over the next four years.

The cuts include proposals to drive down firefighter numbers through “vacancy management”, introduce detrimental crewing systems, cut community safety work and make direct cuts to training arrangements and support structures throughout the service.



Cornish FBU rep, Stuart Pulley, has demanded that the cuts be withdrawn, saying: “These proposals to cut vital frontline emergency cover are irresponsible and dangerous. I know of the anger felt by Cornish Firefighters regarding this continuing attack on our Service and the FBU is already at work making our point clear to local Politicians.

“We are preparing a written submission to the Council on behalf of Firefighters and will engage with Politicians at every level. Our message to the County Council is clear - these cuts are dangerous, they will seriously affect public safety and we demand that they be withdrawn.

I urge all members to attend FBU meetings, discuss this issue and get fully involved with the campaign.

## South West “Ring of Fire” takes campaign to the Public!

South West Firefighters took their "No Cuts to the Fire Service" message into Bristol and Plymouth as part of the national FBU “Ring of Fire” anti cuts campaign.

We were supported by hundreds of members of the public who queued to sign petitions against frontline cuts. Firefighters also handed out leaflets and talked to members of the public and local politicians about the danger of devastating cuts to the Service.

A special "No Cuts" Fire Engine was set up at the event alongside stalls and a stage where firefighters were joined by guest speakers and entertainment was provided throughout the day. The FBU “We Rescue People, Not Banks” t-shirts were a huge success, especially amongst the student community. South West FBU rep Tam McFarlane thanked everyone

who attended, calling the events “a huge success which confirmed public support against cuts to the frontline Fire & Rescue Service”



## FIGHTING FOR THE FIRE SERVICE!



**South West EC Member Tam McFarlane**

**Against a background of funding cuts and political intransigence it is once again left to the FBU to fight for Firefighters and the Fire & Rescue Service.**

In this bulletin we outline the incredible amount of work that your Union is doing in defence of our Service and the professionals that deliver it. Whether it be political engagement, comprehensive consultation responses or even direct action in the fight for fair pensions - it is the FBU, and only the FBU, that is making the case for Firefighters and taking the fight to those who seek dangerous cuts in our service.

Only the FBU has the resources and expertise necessary to develop evidence based, comprehensive responses on behalf of Firefighters - Such as those we have submitted regarding the merger proposals of Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Authorities. In doing so we have highlighted the dangerous impact that funding cuts are already having on our service and the incredible amount of work that our members are doing, often in their own time to keep the public safe.

*"We all have to make our voices heard in the fight for a fair future"*

Such is the fundamental impact that funding cuts are having that, in many areas, it is only through the *goodwill and voluntary* contribution of Firefighters that a safe and effective service can be delivered at all.

Time after time Firefighters are leaving their families and returning to work during their days off in order to plug gaps caused by funding cuts. Cuts in jobs and staff levels have created an over reliance on the goodwill of firefighters to voluntarily provide the most basic and essential of services, such as the provision of emergency cover and the delivery of community safety events.

To make matters worse, there is growing evidence that even the goodwill of firefighters is being exploited to implement funding cuts. Incredibly, and disgracefully, there is a growing trend where some HR managers are requiring firefighters to work extra time on rates of pay outside of NJC agreements, in some instances even at flat rate - or lower. This totally undermines the value and work of a firefighter - as well as badly undermining our ability to negotiate on pay for everyone, nationally.

Many people currently consider the Fire Service to be in crisis - a crisis driven by the dangerous funding cuts of politicians and exacerbated by managers who exploit Firefighters to drive down pay and conditions.

Against this background, it is up to us all, the real professionals of the Fire Service, to stand together and make our voices heard as we fight for a fair future - for our jobs, our Service and for public safety.

The FBU is fighting and campaigning as never before - we are making the case for proper funding, proper jobs, proper cover: We are fighting for the future of the Fire & Rescue Service and the highly skilled staff who deliver it - and we must all stand together to deliver it.

Unity is Strength.

**Tam McFarlane**  
**South West FBU**



Follow us on our own Facebook page: Go to *South West Region of the Fire Brigades Union* and hit the "like" button. You will receive updates on our work and links to how we are fighting for you locally.



Follow us on Twitter at @southwestfbu

Keep up to date with our videos at 'South West FBU'



You can also follow us on our website at: [www.southwestfbu.com](http://www.southwestfbu.com)

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## FBU SOUTH WEST

The Fire Brigades Union is the premier Trade Union for professional Firefighters and Control Staff across the UK. The South West Region is the largest Region in England and we cover Avon, Cornwall, Dorset, Devon & Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire FRS's.

We represent over 85% of uniformed staff across the UK. Our members cover every role from Firefighter to Area Manager, including the retained duty system. We are committed to protecting our Members, their interests at work and to ensuring that the public receive an excellent and professional Fire & Rescue Service. Join the professionals, contact us at:

[www.southwestfbu.com](http://www.southwestfbu.com)

