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Mr. Nolan

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY BUDGET CONSULTATION

With regards to both the Capital and Revenue budgets, the Fire Brigades Union finds itself in an unusual position. With all that has happened in the world in the past two years, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service is finding itself in a pretty healthy position. With the current government unsure with how they are going to pay for the pandemic and also, pressures from both Lancashire Fire Rescue Service and all members of staff having to pay extra National Insurance contributions, we are still weary of what happens next with public sector funding.

Investment with regards to the Environment. Climate change is a real issue and the Fire Brigades Union appreciates the work being carried out by LFRS in looking at ways to reduce their carbon footprint.

Capital Budget – The Fire Brigades Union welcomes plans to continue investment in Vehicles, Operational Equipment, ICT equipment and Buildings. This includes Service Training Centre and the new building with excellent facilities. We welcome the new clean and dirty area with a filter system that the FBU are promoting with the Decon Campaign. Maybe this can be looked at being spread out to all all Operational fire stations.

Revenue Budget – The Fire Brigades Union notes;
We will see in future months what affect the changes to Day Crewing Plus will cost.
The FBU will work with the Authority in campaigning and lobbying Central Government with funding the backdating the payment to members who are affected with Immediate Detriment to their pension following the McCloud-Sargeant judgement.

Borrowing £11.5m to balance the current programme over a five year period does not sound a lot as long as interest rates are low. What sounds worrying for the FBU is how the funding gap in future years will be filled without cuts to front line Operational staff.

The FBU would support an increase in Council Tax as a way of offsetting and lessening the impact of Central Government cuts or drastic changes in the Emergency Cover Review. We look forward to the outcome from the White Paper. Although we prefer to see no reductions, we would support a drawdown of the £16m of Capital reserves as a way of maintaining reductions by natural wastage, rather than redundancy or Fire Station Closures following the Emergency Cover Review. The FBU believes that drastic shift changes or/and station closures would have a detrimental effect on the ability of Fire & Rescue Services to adequately function. We will continue to campaign for proper and adequate funding investment in the service where ever and whenever the opportunity arises.

Yours Sincerely



Kev Wilkie
Fire Brigades Union
Lancashire Brigade Secretary

