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Dear Councillor,

On the agenda for the Personnel and Training Committee scheduled for the 11.7.08 you will be aware of a paper that seeks a decision regards the resolution of the issue of future pay for employees who held the rank of Station officer, now assimilated under the revised pay structure to Watch Manager.

The FBU has campaigned for some years on an equitable resolution to this issue at national level, and earlier this year came to a limited agreement with our national employers on the issue.

Whilst the agreement offered some protection to those affected, it also clearly made provision, in recognition of the additional skills, experience and expertise held by those individuals for further enhancement locally. Fire Authorities were encouraged within the resolution to seek local contractual agreements, which the FBU has sought to do recently.

The committee members have been given 3 options:

- 1 To apply the national agreement and nothing more.
- 2 Temporarily enhancing the national agreement at local level.
- 3 Lifetime protection.

It is disappointing to note that even though the cost of the most expensive measure still falls well within the spending remit of the Chief Fire Officer, that management have chosen to refer this issue to Personnel & Training Committee members, prior to reaching a negotiated local agreement with the Fire Brigades Union.

We have some concerns regarding the produced financial implications, which we believe do not reflect that, potentially the majority of those affected will secure further advancement and will therefore incur no additional costs on the Authority.

The Personnel and Training Committee Paper fails to recognize this fact and therefore we believe it is not an accurate estimate of costs.

Secondly, that on many other previous occasions which have involved budget issues which were far more onerous in impact, brigade management have seen

fit to place a recommendation before authority members on the issue, this does not appear to be the case on this occasion.

We believe there are unique circumstances within West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, which applies to those individuals concerned with the present pay protection arrangements, and we have attempted to resolve this issue through negotiation.

We would hope that there is a further opportunity to resolve this issue through mutual agreement prior to any decision or recommendation on purely financial grounds, taking into account all factors. There is at present no machinery for any negotiated settlement with the elected members of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, and as the representatives of the employees affected we remain eager to resolve this issue.

Yours truly,

Mark Wilson
FBU Brigade Secretary