

WYFRA	PERSONNEL & TRAINING COMMITTEE	11 JULY 2008	ITEM NO:
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REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

**PURPOSE OF REPORT: TO ADVISE MEMBERS OF THE UNION LEARNING FUND
AGREEMENT BETWEEN WYFRS, THE FBU AND UNISON**

RECOMMENDATIONS: THAT MEMBERS NOTE THIS REPORT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT DETAILS

EXEMPTION CATEGORY:

**ACCESS CONTACT OFFICER: MR M REDFEARN (01274 655703)
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

**MR R ANDERSON (01274 655704)
AREA MANAGER, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

BACKGROUND PAPERS. None

OPEN TO INSPECTION:

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Union Learning Fund (ULF) is a government funded initiative to promote learning and personal development in the workplace. ULF Lifelong Learning Partnerships are successfully operating within a number of FRS and support the Government's 'Skills for Life' Initiative and the recommendations of the Leitch Review.
- 1.2 Since March 2003 there has been a legal right for reasonable paid time off for selected staff to train as a Union Learning Representative, as well as an entitlement to reasonable paid time off to carry out their duties. Any time granted to undertake these duties is in accordance with the existing Authority Trades Union Facilities Agreement.

2 INFORMATION

- 2.1 The signing of a formal Lifelong Learning Partnership agreement took place at WYFRS Headquarters on the 12th June 2008. The agreement was signed by the Chief Fire Officer, representatives from Fire Brigades Union and Unison. This was followed by skills for life awareness training.
- 2.2 Also present was local MP. Mike Woods (Batley & Spen), who complimented all parties on the agreement.
- 2.3 Participation by employees in any learning activity agreed by the partnership will be on a voluntary basis. During working hours staff attendance at any learning centre or establishment will be agreed on an individual basis and be, at all times, subject to standard staffing levels and the priorities of the service.
- 2.4 Where ULRs and staff identify individual learning and development needs, which are outside of national or WYFRS's training and development strategy, then the facilitating of any courses should be undertaken solely by ULR's, and attendance on any learning event or courses should be done in the individual's own time.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The FBU have successfully bid for £1.2 million from the Learning and Skills Council to fund this initiative.

4.0 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst any Union Learning Representatives in the workplace would be members of TUC affiliated trade unions, access to learning and development within the workplace via them, would be open to all WWFRS employees.

5.0 SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The setting up of the formal partnership agreement between WYFRS and the FBU will promote lifelong learning in the workplace. (Appendix One)
It will allow the service to work in partnership with representative bodies to identify learning and development initiatives that support and underpin both the aims of the authority and the wider government 'Skills for Life' agenda to raise the levels of numeracy, literacy and ICT skills within the workforce

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That members note the contents of this report.