

Chief Fire Officer's Commentary to the Fire Brigades Union

IRMP Consultation Response

I have considered the response of the FBU to the Authority's IRMP and would make the following comments;

After a long consultation period it is disappointing the FBU have yet again responded late, and outside of the consultation period. This is despite repeated requests by the Authority to respond within the 12 week timetable the Authority sets. The FBU receive very significant subsidy from the Authority to engage in collective discussion, and it is regrettable that despite this major investment by the Authority in providing time and facilities to FBU to respond to consultation, the FBU again fail to respond in the time given.

The response itself is lengthy, but contains little of substance relevant to the IRMP.

Public consultation was independently run with a cross section of members of the public. It is good practice to listen to them and never underestimate or patronise them.

The issue of 4 or 5 riders is extensively covered in the submission, and the FBU arguments are well rehearsed but we welcome ongoing dialogue within the agreed procedures.

The balanced strategy of the Authority in combining excellent emergency response with innovative CFS has seen quite remarkable reductions in fires, deaths and injuries. This success is obvious but for those perhaps too blinkered to see it has been independently validated. We must assume that to suggest HFSCs do not work must have been an error as to pursue an argument known to be untrue would be disappointing to say the least and an insult to the incredible work of our frontline staff, and the political courage and commitment of the Authority over many years.

As regards the recommendations of the FBU, I would make the following simple observations.

Recommendation 1 is unlawful.

Recommendation 2 is impossible.

Recommendation 3 is improbable.

Recommendation 4 is inevitable.

There are a number of small detailed points which will be addressed in future consultations about specific initiatives arising from the IRMP.