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Response to IRMP Supplement 2019-21

UNISON Liverpool City is the recognised trade union for Green Book staff employed by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

UNISON broadly welcomes the proposals as set out in the IRMP. Our priorities are to:

- avoid compulsory redundancies
- protect staff
- maintain terms and conditions
- keep stations open
- maintain use of wholetime fire fighters
- maintain focus on communities.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the new and revised proposals contained within the IRMP Supplement but wish to first comment on a matter that is not contained within the IRMP as follows:

We are disappointed that no consideration has been given within the proposals to bringing ancillary services, e.g. cleaning, back in house. The transfer of formerly directly employed cleaners to a private brought in facility has had a detrimental impact on the staff affected. UNISON urges Merseyside Fire & Rescue to consider bringing this service in-house at the earliest opportunity.

In respect of the new/alternative proposals within the IRMP Supplement, we comment as follows:

Alternative proposal number 5, Changes to Shift Patterns

UNISON welcomes and supports the proposal to improve emergency response and resilience by having up to 30 fire appliances available during the day and night.

We also welcome and support the proposal to maintain five fighters at each of five key locations identified.

We note the proposal to increase the number of available fire engines by introducing a hybrid duty system at three locations.

The use of reserves to pay off debt thereby freeing up revenue budget to achieve these proposals is welcomed by UNISON.

Alternative proposal number 6, Station Mergers

We note this alternative proposal provides for opportunities to explore whether current locations of fire stations and other buildings allow for the provision of best services and whether there is scope for further station mergers.

UNISON understands and acknowledges the needs of the Service to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the Service. However we would be concerned if future station mergers resulted in fewer stations overall. In particular we would be strongly opposed to any measures that resulted in increased response times.

Alternative proposal 19 : Protection

UNISON welcomes the proposal to increase the number of staff in the Protection Team to carry out legislative fire safety work.

We also welcome the proposal to introduce a non-uniformed role of Fire Engineer.

Other

We note that the Authority has budgeted for a 2% pay award. We acknowledge that any pay bill increase above the 2% assumption will require compensating savings to be identified. In the event that such savings are required, UNISON would urge the Authority to make savings in such a way as to protect the staffing establishment and to protect terms and conditions.