

Janet Henshaw
Clerk to the Authority
Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority
Legal Services Department,
Fire Service Headquarters,
Bridle Road,
Bootle,
Merseyside
L30 4YD

Telephone: 0151 296 4301

Fax: **0151 296 4141**

Web Site: **www.merseyfire.gov.uk**

Your ref:

Our ref: JH/DEP/1

Date: 2nd July 2014

Dear Mr Rowe

Employment Policies

Thank you for your letter of 30th June 2014.

Firstly I cannot accept a dispute in relation to the discipline policy/procedures and management levels as both parties jointly agreed to seek external assistance in April 2013 on this issue. A meeting with the national joint secretaries took place but no outcome was attained from this process and the matter was referred back for local determination. On that basis I consider that in relation to this matter any recourse to external assistance has been exhausted.

In relation to your concerns regarding the decision of the Authority taken over the remaining Policies at the Annual General Meeting on 26th June 2014 I offer the following response.

As you are well aware a consultation process, in accordance with the ACAS Code of Practice and Grey Book, which the FBU and other representative bodies were fully

engaged in, was undertaken over a period of 12 weeks (extended from 8 weeks on request).

The consultation process commenced on 4th February 2014 during which time you had numerous opportunities to raise these or any other concerns prior to your letter to members of the Authority. These opportunities include:

- i. An extension to the above consultation of a further 4 weeks, giving a total of 12 weeks consultation period.

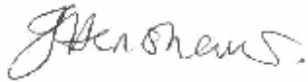
Where the majority of changes proposed by the representative bodies, including the FBU, were accepted with the exception of discipline management levels.

- ii. This was followed by a referral to the Elected Member Task & Finish Group, including all representative body comments for ratification and recommendation to the full Authority.
- iii. Referral on to the Performance & Scrutiny Committee, for which you received the Agenda and invite via email but did not attend (again including all representative bodies' comments).

Despite these numerous opportunities you chose to raise your concerns by letter directly to Elected Members on the night before the Authority AGM. This is a totally unacceptable way to conduct business and is clearly outwith the NJC/08/07 Industrial Relations Protocol, which encourages a joint commitment to a 'no surprises' culture and a commitment to early discussion of emerging issues, neither of which occurred on this occasion.

The Authority has followed the correct procedures throughout and has operated in a transparent manner with 'no surprises'. This late stage approach cannot be procedurally sufficient and is beyond any measure of good faith.

That said, and in the interest of maintaining good industrial relations I am, as far as the other Policies and Instructions are concerned, prepared to refer these to the National Joint Secretaries. However, you must firstly inform me as to the precise issues you wish to be discussed so that all parties are clear at the outset, given that all of the other representative bodies involved in the process have welcomed and subsequently agreed all of the Policies.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Janet Henshaw'.

Janet Henshaw
Clerk to The Authority