



The Fire Brigades Union

LONDON REGION

Established 1918 John Horner Mews, off Frome Street, London N1 8PB. Tel: 020 7359 3638 Fax: 020 7359 3686 E-Mail: 11ra@fbu-ko.org.

To: NSSN and Associated Trade Unions

5th November 2010

Dear Linda,

London FBU Suspension of Strike Action

The Fire Brigades Union and its member's in London are overwhelmed by the many letters of support and solidarity received from trade unions affiliated to the NSSN and SERTUC, especially PCS, RMT, NUT, CWU and SERTUC, whilst the strike planned for the 5th and 6th November 2010 has been suspended, this in no way infers that the dispute has concluded.

In view of the media attention yesterday and the shambolic exploits of the chair of LFEPA Councillor Brian Coleman, we feel that it is necessary to put the record straight as the media is clearly not prepared to portray the truth, but instead concentrate on the lies, spin and rhetoric that spill from the mouth of the Tory bully (Coleman).

Contrary to the claims of Brian Coleman, the decision by the FBU in London to suspend strikes was based upon sound judgement and significant movement from management.

You will by now be aware that contrary to the claims made by the Fire Minister, The Mayor of London, The Chair of LFEPA and the Commissioner of the LFB that the Capitals public would be safe on what is the busiest night of the year for the London Fire Brigade. The FBU and our member's in London do not accept such claims and we believe that the contingency plans and use of inadequately trained AssetCo staff are neither sufficient nor adequate to ensure the safety of the public at this time.

To support our claims that the LFB were prepared to put the public at risk through this weekend, we have evaluated how the AssetCo staff performed during the previous two strike dates, whereby we witnessed AssetCo staff not capable of correctly using equipment with no understanding of how they should tackle a fire appropriately. Further concerns arose in the driving abilities of those staff when three of our members including myself were injured on picket lines.

Since the 31st Oct there have been three days of negotiations which failed to deliver a way forward, management maintained that their bottom line was 11/13 with strings and that they wanted the FBU to enter into arbitration on the 5th Nov with the threat of mass sackings still scheduled to take place on 26th November 2010. However in light of the above the FBU proposed to management they agree in writing:

1. That their bottom line is 11/13 with no strings.
2. That any decision on mass sackings would not take place on the 18th November 2010.
3. That management agree to attend a Resolution Advisory Panel on 16th November 2010.

I am pleased to report that management gave a full written agreement to the above and therefore the London Regional Committee felt that this was enough to suspend the proposed strike action in order that the general public could enjoy both Diwali and the Fireworks festivities, safe in the knowledge that should that require attendance of the Fire Brigade then the public would receive an attendance of professionally trained Firefighters as opposed to a makeshift gaggle of un experienced and poorly trained individuals.

Furthermore, we believe that we are now better placed to enter into arbitration on our terms and not the terms of the employer, we also believe that we will now not be entering such arbitration with a loaded gun against our heads.

More importantly, management's written agreement to the above, also secures that our members will be able to be consulted fully on any recommendation that may be derived from such arbitration, without the threat of mass sackings on the 18th November 2010.

Had Management have agreed to this position earlier then we would not have needed to take strike action, but clearly it has been our unity and strike action that has forced them to commit to such an agreement as outlined above.

Yours Fraternally

Ian Leahair

Ian Leahair
Executive Council Member for London
Fire Brigades Union