



THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT

RESTRUCTURING THE POLITICAL WORK OF THE UNION

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2004

Executive Council Statement on Restructuring the Political Work of the Union

The Executive Council acknowledges and shares the FBU membership's anger at this Government's tactics used during our pay dispute. However there is also a general disillusion with the direction of Government policy, the abandoning of agreed Labour conference policy without discussion and the dumping of manifesto commitments, likewise, before discussion.

Many within the Labour Party, not only other unions, are also deeply unhappy with this Government. However, disillusion and anger at a Labour Government is not the same as anger and disillusion with the Labour Party and we should continue to work with others within the Party who also wish to see meaningful change in policy direction and in the conduct of Government.

We wish to ensure disillusion with Government should not lead to disengagement from the political process. Our response should be to revitalise and reinvigorate our political work and build a strategy that best serves the interests of members and the public which we serve.

The whole constitutional and political map of the UK is changing and will continue to change. We must look to recent moves by Government to devolve responsibility for fire services to Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and in future, possibly, regional assemblies.

The Fire Brigades Union, therefore, should carry out a root and branch restructuring of its political work to ensure that our political activities are best directed at achieving the aspirations of our members at national, regional and local level.

This Conference recommends:

- 1) Reducing our affiliation to the Labour Party to £20,000, using the money freed up for wider political education, campaigns and political work;

- 2) Allow members more flexibility nationally and regionally to use the political fund in pursuit of the Union's objectives;
- 3) Restructure and increase the political work of the Union nationally and regionally to take account of the major constitutional changes within the UK now and in the future;
- 4) Produce regular reports (including an Annual Report to Conference) indicating the breadth of the Union's political work;
- 5) Increase the political education work of the Union;
- 6) Widen the current parliamentary group to ensure a greater impact on policy making now and in the future;
- 7) Allow the FBU Political Fund to be used in future to support organisations whose policies and principles are supportive of this Union.

Furthermore, having considered decisions taken at recent Annual Conferences, the Executive Council recommend adopting the following position:

The Fire Brigades Union Political Fund may in future be used to support organisations whose policies are supportive of the policies and principles of this Union. This may include organisations who stand in opposition to New Labour so long as they uphold policies and principles in line with those of the Fire Brigades Union.

The above statement is a radical restructuring of the union's Political Fund and is seeking to ensure that the Political Fund serves the interests of members in attaining our objectives.

Moved by the EXECUTIVE COUNCIL