THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT

THE FUTURE STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2002

A PAPER ON THE FUTURE STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION

- Nothing is as constant as change. In some senses we are changing all the time, responding to circumstances and political developments at local and national level. There are several significant developments not too far over the horizon. The Union needs to be uniformly stron to either negotiate in or campaign to resist across all our membership, regions and in all the political arenas on these issues.

- So it may be opportune as a progressive organisation, particularly one of our size and regional complexity, to look at its democratic structures and organisation in a strategic root and branch way.

- The FBU has a proud history and we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Much, most of what we do and how we do it is excellent. And there is, in these circumstances, a temptation to say “if it isn’t broke, don’t fix it.” But that would be complacent and would overlook opportunities to improve organisation nationally and regionally (or at least air the debate and reach conclusions either way).

- Indeed one of our greatest challenges is to get right the interface between National and Regional and to further improve membership services and participation so that whether the member is in rural Truro or urban Tottenham, he or she has equal access to the Union’s resources and democracy. This may involve some re-allocation of finances or changes in our structures or methods of working.

- Firstly we have to develop a national focus for our work, which enables us to play to our strengths as a Union whilst remaining sensitive to the needs of campaigns in regions. This is especially the case in view of the quantity and speed of the potential for change facing us across our industry and the public sector in general.

- Secondly, our Regional structure has to better promote membership services and membership involvement. All that we do must be membership based.

- Regional structure must better facilitate, throughout the National Union, aside from the important services the Union provides, membership involvement. Support of the Union's National Policy Agenda will be at the heart of our success. Failure at this point will be the explanation of our downfall.

- At present our Regions vary enormously in size, both of membership, geographic area and population covered. These proportions do change but this is usually a fairly slow and predictable process.

- There are of course considerations other than size however measured – in particular those relating to national Parliaments and devolved Government e.g. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- In conclusion to this preface, it would be entirely understandable but potentially unhelpful, to look at the following proposals from a narrow even personal perspective. Every effort has to be made to embrace necessary change, and to resist any change for change sake but also to plan what is required for the next 10 to 15 years and not based on now or the past.

- Finally – the General Secretary, President and EC acknowledge the dedication and work of all our officials and wishes to place on record their appreciation of all they do to progress the Fire Brigades Union.

ANDY GILCHRIST

GENERAL SECRETARY

THE REGIONAL LANDSCAPE

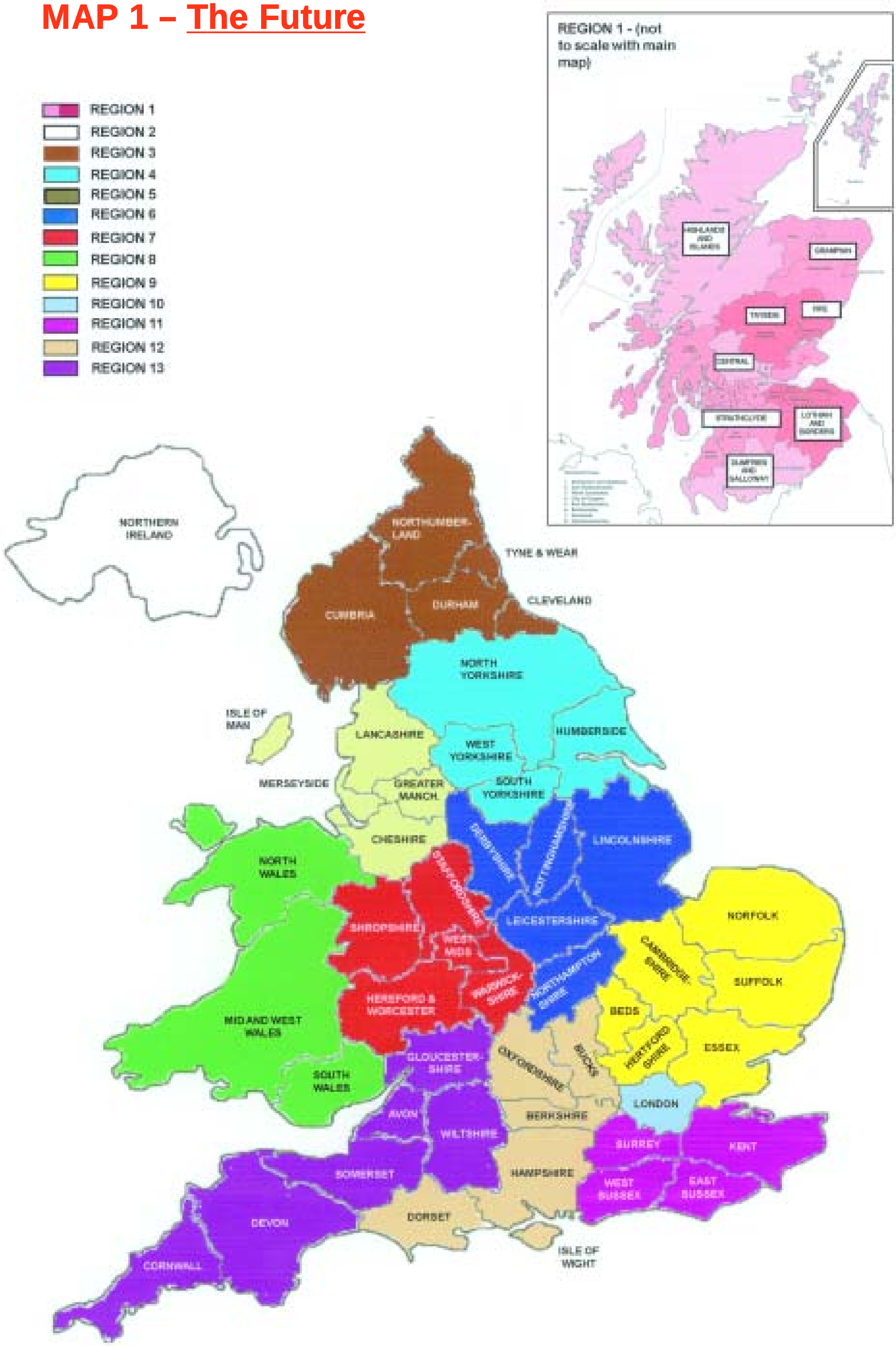
- It is 27 years since we last looked at Regional membership comparisons together with the location of offices and officers. We need to consider a new Regional map, a new distribution of officials, offices and other resources to better facilitate our central objectives.

- The Executive Council has, following the discussion on its own Sub Committee's paper, prepared a proposed Regional Structure for the medium to long term for the FBU; it is set out in Map 1, with the current regional structure set out in Map 2.

MAP 1 – <u>THE FUTURE</u>

This Map seeks to address one clear area of difficulty. The issue is that of the existing Region 9, ‘North West’.

MAP 1 – The Future



MAP 1 – THE FUTURE

MEMBERSHIP BY REGION

REGION 1
Central
Dumfries & Galloway
Fife
Grampian
Highlands & Islands
Lothian & Borders
Strathclyde
Tayside
Membership – 7,007

REGION 2
Northern Ireland
Membership – 1,890

REGION 3
Cleveland
Cumbria
Durham
Northumberland
Tyne & Wear
Membership – 3,419

REGION 4
Humberside
North Yorkshire
South Yorkshire
West Yorkshire
Membership – 4,357

REGION 5
Cheshire
Greater Manchester
Isle of Man
Lancashire
Merseyside
Membership – 5,889

REGION 6
Derbyshire
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Northamptonshire
Nottinghamshire
Membership – 3,544

REGION 7
Hereford & Worcester
Shropshire
Staffordshire
Warwickshire
West Midlands
Membership – 4,577

REGION 8
Mid & West Wales
North Wales
South Wales
Membership – 3,349

REGION 9
Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Essex
Hertfordshire
Norfolk
Suffolk
Membership – 3447

REGION 10
London
Membership – 5,897

REGION 11
East Sussex
Kent
Surrey
West Sussex
Membership – 3,363

REGION 12
Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Dorset
Hampshire
Isle of Wight
Oxfordshire
Membership – 2,938

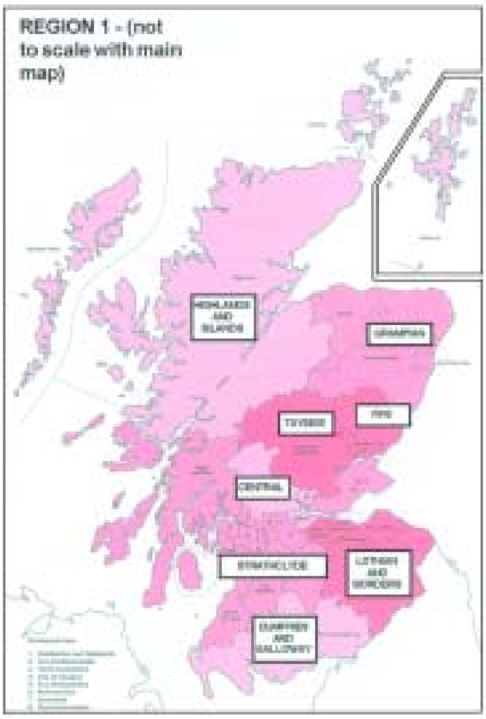
REGION 13
Avon
Cornwall
Devon
Gloucestershire
Somerset
Wiltshire
Membership – 2,727

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 52,404

MAP 2 – THE CURRENT MODEL

Reflects the current position in this debate.

MAP 2 – The Current Model



MAP 2 – THE CURRENT MODEL

MEMBERSHIP BY REGION

REGION 1
Central
Dumfries & Galloway
Fife
Grampian
Highlands & Islands
Lothian & Borders
Strathclyde
Tayside
Membership 7,007

REGION 2
Northern Ireland
Membership – 1,890

REGION 3
Cleveland
Durham
Northumberland
Tyne & Wear
Membership – 2,785

REGION 4
Humberside
North Yorkshire
South Yorkshire
West Yorkshire
Membership – 4,357

REGION 5
Cumbria
Greater Manchester
Isle of Man
Lancashire
Membership – 4,331

REGION 6
Derbyshire
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Northamptonshire
Nottinghamshire
Membership – 3,544

REGION 7
Hereford & Worcester
Shropshire
Staffordshire
Warwickshire
West Midlands
Membership – 4,577

REGION 8
Mid & West Wales
North Wales
South Wales
Membership – 3,349

REGION 9
Cheshire
Merseyside
Membership – 2,192

REGION 10
Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Essex
Hertfordshire
Norfolk
Suffolk
Membership – 3447

REGION 11
London
Membership – 5,897

REGION 12
East Sussex
Kent
Surrey
West Sussex
Membership – 3,363

REGION 13
Berkshire
Buckinghamshire
Dorset
Hampshire
Isle of Wight
Oxfordshire
Membership – 2,938

REGION 14
Avon
Cornwall
Devon
Gloucestershire
Somerset
Wiltshire
Membership – 2,727

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 52,404

Our current membership by Region is as follows: (as at 1.12.01).

Region 1	Scotland	7007
Region 2	Northern Ireland	1890
Region 3	North East	2785
Region 4	Yorkshire & Humberside	4357
Region 5	Lancashire, Manchester, Cumbria, Isle of Man	4331
Region 6	East Midlands	3544
Region 7	West Midlands	4577
Region 8	Wales	3349
Region 9	Merseyside & Cheshire	2192
Region 10	Eastern East Anglia	3447
Region 11	London	5897
Region 12	South East	3363
Region 13	Southern Region	2938
Region 14	South West	2727

The adoption of the ‘new’ Region 5 would give it a membership of (5,889), and the new Region 3 (3,419).

- To cover the existing 14 Regions we have 32 offices.

Practice varies – in Region 6, which covers five counties; we have one office, while in Region 7 covering six counties we have six offices. The description and capacity of the term "office" is also a very broad definition here.

- It is not self-evident that this structure and distribution of offices is the most membership friendly and cost effective.

- The issue of ‘office’ support to the new regional structure would clearly have to be addressed speedily if the proposed new Regional Structure is adopted.

To support the new proposed Regional Map, the Executive Council is proposing to make provision for the following Official and staff distribution.

FBU OFFICIALS IN UNITED KINGDOM PER REGION

BASED ON "THE CURRENT MODEL"

Executive Council, Regional and Brigade Officials + Staff

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13	R14
Executive Council	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reg. Offs.	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
Brigade Officials (incl BMS)	24	1	12	12	12	16	17	9	6	18	-	12	18	18
Secretarial Support	0	0	0	PT	0	0	0	0	0	PT	FT	0	0	0

Current Sectional Representatives

	CSNC	ONC	WOMEN	RETAINED	B&EMM	GAY & LESBIAN
Executive Council	1	1	1	1	0	0
National Committee Secretary	1	1	1	1	1	1
National Committee Chair	1	1	1	1	1	1
Regional Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.
R1	1	1	1	1	0	1
R2	1	1	1	1	1	0
R3	1	1	0	1	1	1
R4	1	1	1	1	1	1
R5	1	1	0	1	1	1
R6	1	1	1	1	1	0
R7	1	1	1	1	1	1
R8	1	1	1	1	1	0
R9	1	1	1	1	1	0
R10	1	1	1	1	1	1
R11	-	1	1	-	1	1
R12	1	1	0	1	0	0
R13	1	1	1	1	1	1
R14	1	1	1	1	1	1

FBU OFFICIALS IN UNITED KINGDOM PER REGION

BASED ON "THE FUTURE"

Executive Council, Regional and Brigade Officials + Staff

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10	R11	R12	R13
Executive Council	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reg. Offs.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Brigade Officials (incl BMS)	24	1	15	12	15	16	17	9	18	–	12	18	18
Secretarial Support	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT	PT

Sectional Representatives

	CSNC	ONC	WOMEN	RETAINED	B&EMM	GAY & LESBIAN
Executive Council	1	1	1	1	1	0
National Committee Secretary	1	1	1	1	1	1
National Committee Chair	1	1	1	1	1	1
Regional Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.	Reg. Reps.
R1	1	1	1	1	1	1
R2	1	1	1	1	1	1
R3	1	1	1	1	1	1
R4	1	1	1	1	1	1
R5	1	1	1	1	1	1
R6	1	1	1	1	1	1
R7	1	1	1	1	1	1
R8	1	1	1	1	1	1
R9	1	1	1	1	1	1
R10	–	1	1	–	1	1
R11	1	1	1	1	1	1
R12	1	1	1	1	1	1
R13	1	1	1	1	1	1

- It is intended inside of these proposals to make provision and thereby ensure that at least one Regional Official (it is suggested the Regional Secretary) be provided with a full-time release trade union agreement with the appropriate Fire Authority. On the proposed arrangements the potential expense for the provision of 13 Regional Officials on full-time release at the FBU's expense would be £328,430. It is to be remembered that this figure will vary depending on the approach by each Fire Authority and the eventual Regional map agreed. But it is nevertheless a guide.

- The provision of each Region to have Part-Time Secretarial support at the expense of Head Office equates to a total of £161,594.

- It was for this 'professionalisation' of the Union amongst other reasons that the membership granted the increase in membership subscriptions.

To address the future in respect of Officials it is proposed:

- **Executive Council Members**

  The only obvious anomaly at this level is the provision for 2 EC Members for the London Region. It is hard to sustain this position over other regions even on numbers of members. Perhaps more pertinent is the fact that the geography of London potentially makes it a relatively easier region to 'service'. The added complications of retained, and Control members and the significant problems of rural communities also negate this 'special' status. Of course London region is a complex area of the Union's membership and it is the capital city. However the principle of each regional and sectional constituency electing their own single EC representative ought to apply. It is proposed that rule changes be made to bring this principle within the Rule Book.

- **Each Region**

  Will have 4 Officials one of whom, in the absence of a good Trade Union arrangement, will be on a "full-time facility", and paid for by the FBU. The consistent problems of Trade Union Leave are important here, but the ability for a Region Official (Regional Secretary) to take a day-to-day overview of the administrative work in the Region will be of immense importance. The cost factor is potentially significant but should not stand in the way of this progressive change. Of course our Union will remain very much a 'lay official' one, with all that is good about that. But the time to embark on this change is both politically timely and indeed financially possible.

- **Secretarial Support**

To be agreed by the Executive Council on a case by case basis to be used for the benefit of all Officials under direction of Executive Council Members. Every Region has Officials who for no fault of their own are frankly bogged down with necessary but time-consuming office duties. Our elected Officials need to take a strategic and hands-on approach to developing the membership campaigns and the maximum time possible must be freed up for this. This modest proposal is that those regions who wish (all will be encouraged) would be able through Head Office to have part-time professional Secretarial Support in the Regional Office. The 'recruitment' would be carried out through Head Office and those appointed would work to the GMB negotiated working practice and agreements.

- **Each Official**

Will need relevant levels of training, which will require periodic updating. This is in addition to political education.

- **National Officials**

It is clear that the work carried out in Head Office is too often for the best of reasons 'quantity based' e.g. dealing with post (of which there is a lot), clearing the screen of email etc. Head Office Officials are a valuable and yes even expensive resource. It is sensible then to look at:

- New ways of working
- Training requirements
- Reporting to General Secretary and Executive Council
- The team-based approach

The answer is not to simply employ further National Officials at this juncture. At least until the above and associated issues have been addressed and given time to evolve.

- **President, Vice President and National Treasurer**

These are the most senior lay officials, and clearly have important roles within the rules of our Union. They also have important 'leadership' roles in the campaigns we initiate. Again ways of accentuating the latter over the former should be looked at:

- *New ways of working*
- *Sharing, at appropriate levels, of current rule book functions*
- *Head Office Secretarial support*

President

It is proposed to remain Lay Official status.

Vice-President

It is proposed to remain Lay Official status.

- *Greater use of appropriate level of officials to assist with duties.*
- *Head Office space and dedicated secretarial support – to assist in covering National/Regional responsibilities when at Head Office.*

Treasurer

It is proposed to remain Lay Official status.

- *Greater use of Finance Committee and EC members.*
- *Provide dedicated Office space and secretarial support – to assist in covering National/Regional responsibilities when at Head Office.*

The above positions will retain their unique status with the Union's Rule Book in the above way. To assist in 'projects' which they will undoubtedly be required to head up, then greater use of administrative and professional staff (external & internal) will enable these tasks to be facilitated easier and the officials concerned to act as co-ordinators or task leaders. Tasks provided to these officials and any Working Parties and/or Sub Committees must be given a life span and a clear deadline.

- **Loss of Officials**

  Transitional Arrangements for Official Structure

  The entire thinking and eventual proposals on the 're-distribution' of Officials, which decisions on this paper may make, are based on the notion that no Official will be removed from office or forced to relinquish office prior to his/her proper election date.

  The Executive Council Sub-Committee for Implementation will consider each occurrence on this basis and within the given time-frame would expect to comply fully with this principle.

- **Trade Union Leave**

  - Grey Book protocol needs revision (needs to cover raft of officials, minimum number of days problematic).

  - Deploy partnership approach and language to justify this

  - Equality (at present NJC get TU leave, EC don't). Raise at NJC level.

- **Stress**

  We need a strategy to assist Officials in coping with stress, including better time management and more realistic workloads. The Union, whatever the outcome of this Report, must take on board the recommendations of the EC Stress Sub Committee. The implications are likely to be costly, difficult and challenging. This is however no reason to avoid the issue, because the alternative is to prevaricate and obstruct the changes necessary. The result will be far more costly to the Union its Officials and those closest to them.

THE FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE

- **Funding**

  - This emphasis on a membership-based philosophy requires the Union to look at the current funding arrangements at all levels and in all areas. In particular, the long standing arrangements for reimbursement or financing of regions from Head Office demands attention.

  - The reimbursement of expenses to all Officials needs transparency, review and adherence to Inland Revenue regulations. The Union needs to quickly achieve agreement with the Inland Revenue – notwithstanding any future changes members may want to see.

  - There is a need to review current purchasing arrangements for certain essential and on going items for use throughout the Union to ensure standardisation and of course maximum cost effectiveness. To this end some level of central purchasing is necessary and this will be looked at in the context of this document.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Objective:

To accomplish a method of financing Regions on a Quarterly basis by a fair and equitable means, so that Regions do not have to receive additional funding or be in the position of accumulating unnecessary funds.

We have identified common denominators within Regions. The number of members, geographic area and density, exploring and calculating any correlation that may lead to a satisfactory formula. None of which have created a fair method of financing Regions.

It is with this background and the pressing need to resolve the problem of financing in the Regions that we need to find a satisfactory system.

Recommendation:

The Imprest System

Collins Concise Dictionary Definition:

Imprest: *A fund of cash from which a department pays incidental expenses, topped up periodically from central funds.*

It would be the intention to dispense with the present formula, created a number of years ago. This system has served us well but has created anomalies in the financial structure between Regions.

Each Region would have a dedicated financial package calculated over a period of four quarters, giving or manufacturing a figure sufficient for that Region's needs on a quarterly basis.

However if a Region were for example involved in an Industrial Dispute which generated increased expenditure taking them below a minimum operating figure, then an automatic top-up would operate, thereby bringing the Region back to its original figure for the quarter.

Therefore each Region will have an amount of money to operate on a quarterly basis. The Region's expenditure would normally be refunded or simply topped up to their particular operating level at the end of each quarter.

The commission paid to Regions will cease in its present form, as this serves no practical purpose. It will simply be integrated into the return on a quarterly basis.

Payment of delegates to National Committees will not be refunded to Regions by Head Office. Regions will be responsible for these payments and the financial implication taken into account within the Regional Return.

The determination of Information Technology will be the responsibility of Head Office.

Office furnishings to be purchased through Head Office.

Head Office to be invoiced directly for both of the above and will be responsible for payment.

Conclusion:

Imprest System

This system is not and should not be interpreted as an opportunity to increase expenditure within Regions unnecessarily. All forms of expenditure must be authorised and monitored.

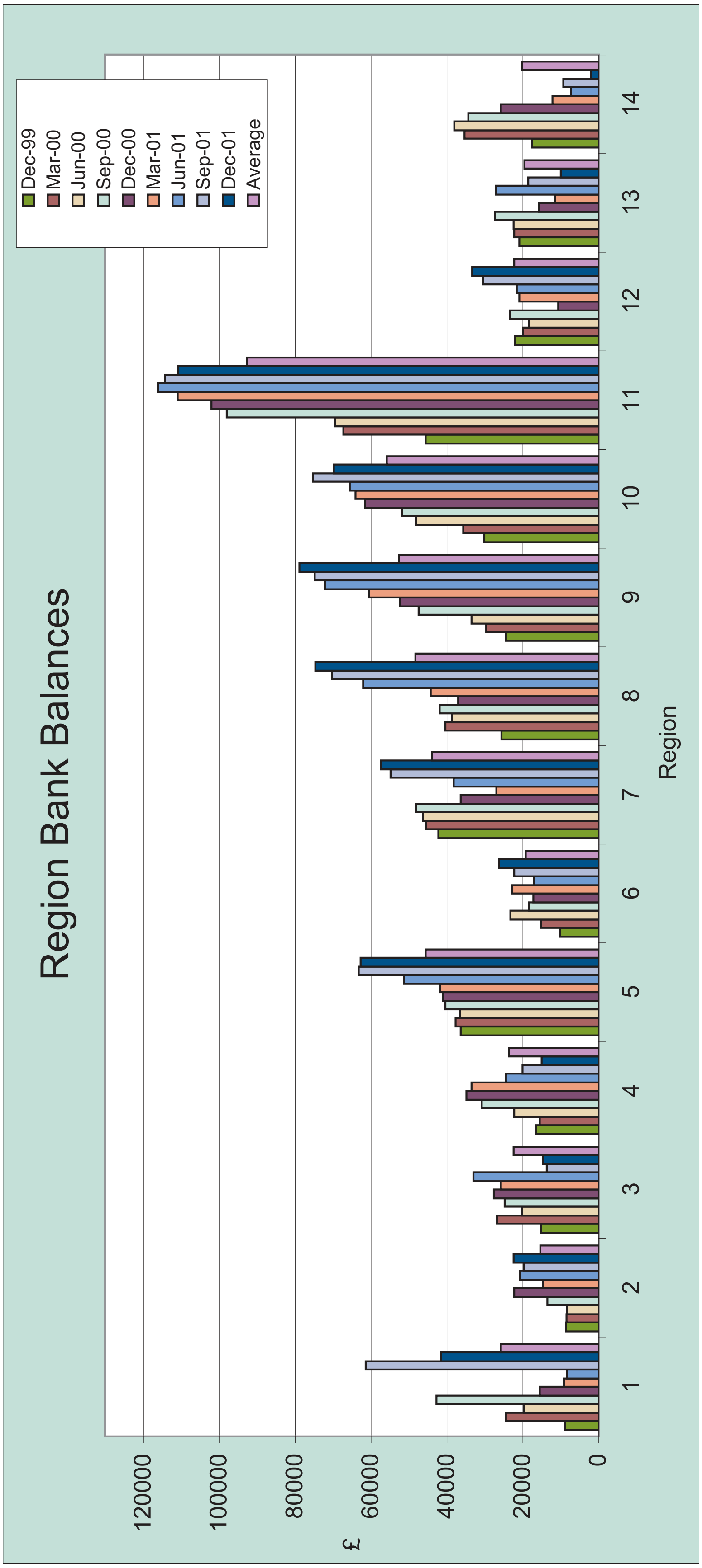
Control and accountability is the direct responsibility of the Regional Treasurer and ultimately the Executive Council Member of each Region.

Quarterly Returns to be checked by the National Treasurer as present policy.

Financial position of each Region at the December 2001

Region 1	£ 41,526
Region 2	£ 22,328
Region 3	£ 14,584
Region 4	£ 14,917
Region 5	£ 62,716
Region 6	£ 26,155
Region 7	£ 57,219
Region 8	£ 74,623
Region 9	£ 78,831
Region 10	£ 69,629
Region 11	£ 110,652
Region 12	£ 33,276
Region 13	£ 9,987
Region 14	£ 2,032
TOTAL	**£618,477**

REGIONAL BANK BALANCES



The current Quarterly return received by Regions

Region 1	£	60,818.21
Region 2	£	17,171.73
Region 3	£	25,522.20
Region 4	£	39,657.88
Region 5	£	37,802.05
Region 6	£	26,854.61
Region 7	£	39,622.56
Region 8	£	24,613.71
Region 9	£	21,368.40
Region 10	£	28,171.40
Region 11	£	56,085.78
Region 12	£	28,549.06
Region 13	£	26,830.32
Region 14	£	28,793.86
TOTAL	**£**	**461,861.74**

SUMMARY

At the present moment there are four Regions receiving additional funding on a quarterly basis.

Other Regions have asked and receive additional funding to assist on an ad hoc basis with the financing of their Region. (For example to purchase Information Technology).

It is clear from the content of this Report that problems are created through the present form of funding.

- It is at best unfair.
- Does not justly serve the Union, its Officials or Members.
- Has and is continuing to cause poor distribution of assets.

But perhaps worst of all, it has created Regions with unnecessary prosperity and others who have to seek and ask for additional funding.

There is a need for change, the time is now.

THE PROPOSAL IS TO MOVE TO THE PROPOSED SYSTEM OF REGIONAL FUNDING.

Figures for Financing Regions on a Quarterly Basis are proposed as follows

REGION	FINANCE PER QUARTER
1 Central, Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, Grampian, Highlands & Islands, Lothian & Borders, Strathclyde, Tayside	**73,000**
2 Northern Ireland	**19,000**
3 Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear	**31,000**
4 Humberside, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire	**40,000**
5 Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Isle of Man, Lancashire, Merseyside	**33,000**
6 Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire	**30,000**
7 Hereford & Worcester, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands	**37,000**
8 Mid & West Wales, North Wales, South Wales	**23,000**
9 Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk	**32,000**
10 London	**50,000**
11 East Sussex, Kent, Surrey, West Sussex	**28,000**
12 Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire	**28,000**
13 Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire	**32,000**

It is recommended that for the 1st Quarter only, when these payments are introduced, that an additional 10% of the Quarterly return received by each Region is also paid.

These figures represent an average of expenditure for each Region over the preceding 4 Quarters and as such reflect the activity carried out by the Region. These figures will be subject to close monitoring and are open to regular review by negotiation through the Executive Council Member with Head Office.

NOTE:
The above figures do not include or take account of an Education Grant/Budget for each Region.

THE REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

We are fully aware of the need and reasons for creating a new financial package, however there are several factors that we must achieve or work within, for this package to be successful and accepted.

1. Consideration of Inland Revenue requirements and legislation.
2. To secure agreements/dispensations with the Inland Revenue.
3. Cost-effectiveness and affordability.
4. A level of allowances/reimbursement that not only incorporates the above but creates and gives a fair and equitable financial return to officials.
5. A standardisation of expenses.
6. Method and implementation of refinancing regions.

The financial package must encompass and give consideration to the following methods of expenditure and claiming reimbursement:

1. Travel
2. Subsistence
3. Entertainment
4. Honoraria
5. Car Allowances
6. Child Care
7. Phones
8. Investment
9. Credit Union

TRAVEL ON UNION BUSINESS

Categories of travel vary but can primarily be broken down into two headings:

1. Fuel/mileage (use of private car)
2. Public transport

Form of payment or expenditure can also be broken down into two headings:

1. Cash
2. Credit card

The financial reimbursement for the use of a private car on union business allows for:

1. Fuel.
2. Depreciation and wear and tear.

Public transport includes the following:

1. Taxi
2. Bus
3. Train
4. Tube/Underground
5. Aeroplane
6. Ferry

Recommendations

Use of Private Car

1. Officials up to and including Brigade Officials receive 25p per mile.
2. This mileage rate to be paid in all Regions and by Head Office.

3. This rate to be claimed irrespective of the reason/purpose of the journey or to what part of the country. Provided the journey is wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred for business purposes in the execution of official union duties.

4. A claim for travel must not be made if there has been no cost to the individual.

5. Officials must not claim a mileage rate if they have travelled by public transport.

6. Claims must be made on the appropriate forms, signed and correctly filled in for authorisation of payment to take place.

7. Travel by car requires verification.

Note: The paying for fuel by credit card does create an anomaly. (See Recommendations for Honoraria). The union recognises this anomaly and the need for it to be addressed.

Executive Council Members should continue to use their credit cards. The use of credit cards to be extended to Regional Officials and Sectional Secretaries and chairs for travel purposes creating further control and accountability. This will be issued through Head Office.

Public Transport

1. The union will only reimburse the cost incurred by the individual.

2. Reimbursement will only take place when receipts are provided.

3. When practicable officials with credit cards should continue to use them.

4. A receipt for public transport must be produced for fares of £5 and over. Also a receipt for parking fees is required where possible.

Note: It is accepted that for tube and other travel a production of a receipt is not at times possible. For travel by train or plane a receipt must be produced.

If claims are made prior to travel, receipts must be produced on return and given/sent to the appropriate official/department.

Executive Council Members

When attending meetings in London Executive Council Members claim on a separate form rather than their daily work sheets. This does and will cause further problems with the Inland Revenue plus the accountability of expenditure. This is primarily due to the fact that expenditure is not accounted for through receipts and historically has been anticipated by individual members.

Recommendation:

That a float of £500 is given to each Executive Council Member, having been duly signed for and agreed that the said amount will be paid back in full at the request of the General Secretary.

Executive Council Members will in future claim on their daily work sheets for any meetings in London. Any existing floats held by Executive Council Members will be subsumed by prior agreement with the General Secretary.

Any variation to the levels of reimbursement for travel or fuel will take place on an annual basis or at the discretion of the General Secretary. The General Secretary will bring recommendations to the Finance Sub Committee meeting for consideration and endorsement after consultation with the National Treasurer. The Executive Council would then receive the Finance Sub-Committees recommendations.

SUBSISTENCE

It must be clearly understood that subsistence is provided to allow the individual money for food and drink or refreshment during the hours worked.

For example:

1. Breakfast.

2. Lunch.

3. Dinner.

For the majority of occasions during the working day within Regions a sliding scale should be introduced allowing for and incorporating the following:

Section A

1. Time away from home.

2. Hours worked or duration of meeting/meetings.

3. Inclusive of travel times.

	2 hours	up to and including	5 hours	=	£ 6.00
over	5 hours	up to and including	9 hours	=	£ 12.00
over	9 hours	up to and including	24 hours	=	£16.00

These rates are not accumulative over a 24-hour period.

Overnight Stay - 24 hour - rate as below:

24 hour rate	=	£ 25.00

[Provided no meals are being provided by the union]

24-hour Rate - Incorporating a Meal provided by the Union

Alternatively a maximum of £16.00 can be paid in relation to the sliding scale above and an evening meal provided by:

1. Use of a credit card.

2. A meal at the hotel at which you are staying.

If however an Official has worked for a period during a day within their Reigon, and then for whatever reason travels outside of their region on union business the sliding scale would automatically cease and the rates indicated in Section B below, would come into force.

Section B

Rates for Officials when attending any Union Meeting Outside of Their Regions (other than below in Section C):

Brigade Officials & Regional Representatives	£15.00 per day
Regional Officials	£ 20.00 per day
Sectional Sec/Chairs	£ 20.00 per day
Executive Council Members	£ 30.00 per day

No further cash payment/reimbursement for an evening meal would be paid without a receipt. Evening meals may be purchased/obtained by:

1. Credit card

or

2. The hotel at which the official is staying can provide a meal.

No other forms of payment would be made to Executive Council Members, for example entertainment, unless agreed/approved by the General Secretary.

Section C

Annual Conference and Schools/Seminars where meals are provided.

No subsistence will be paid where all meals are provided.

The union will pay a Delegates Daily Allowance.

Daily rate of allowance to be subject upon status of official when attending.

I therefore recommend the following:

Student	£ 10.00 per day
Annual Conference Delegate	£ 20.00 per day
Regional Officials	£ 20.00 per day
Executive Council Member	£ 30.00 per day

No other forms of payment would be made to Executive Council Members, for example entertainment, unless agreed/approved by the General Secretary.

To ensure that travel and subsistence levels are appropriate, an annual review will take place at the January/February Finance Sub-Committee Meeting. The General Secretary will bring forward recommendations in consultation with the National Treasurer for consideration of the Finance Sub-Committee. Those recommendations would then be brought before the Executive Council.

Section D

Business Entertainment Expenses other than those occasions indicated in Sections B and C.

Entertainment expenditure is to be accounted for and fully reimbursed.

Therefore receipts must be provided to allow for reimbursement, control and full accountability.

Criteria for claiming entertainment should be as previously agreed by the Executive Council.

a) All names of those being entertained must be given.
b) The position of those being entertained
c) What type and reason for the entertainment
d) Receipts must be provided.

Entertainment expenditure must be wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in the execution of official union business/ duties.

HONORARIUMS – RULE 28

An honorarium is paid to Regional Officials up to and including the President. The figure ranges from £154.59 up to £215.30 paid per quarter and adjusted annually to maintain this relationship with the qualified fire-fighters weekly pay.

Regional Officials	Receive £618.36 annually
Executive Council Members	Receive £741.52 annually
Vice-President & National Treasurer	Receive £795.60 annually
President	Receives £887.00 annually

Honoraria are paid to:

- 56 Regional Officials
- 15 Executive Council Members
- President, Vice President & National Treasurer.

With the introduction and election of other Executive Council Members the figures will increase.

At present Honoraria payments incur a tax liability of approximately £5,018.00 within the PSA.

[Figures used are for the period of 1999 to 2000]

The following recommendation will assist in offsetting or account for the use of a credit card for fuel, as the credit card does not allow for the cost/expenditure incurred through wear and tear or depreciation of a vehicle.

Recommendation:

To dispense with the honoraria payment for all officials up to but not including the President and replace with an allowance for maintenance of a vehicle.

Regional Officials and Executive Council Members to receive an allowance of equal amount, payment to be made at six monthly intervals on an annual basis commencing January 1st of each year. Further payment to be made to officials on July 1st.

Recommended allowance of £1,200.00 per year. This figure to be adjusted annually if necessary by the Finance Sub Committee following recommendation by the General Secretary in consultation with the National Treasurer. Those recommendations to be brought before the Executive Council.

The President would not be entitled to the allowance as the union supplies a vehicle.

Recommendation

For the President to continue receiving an Honorarium, this to be increased to £300 per quarter. The link to the qualified fire-fighters weekly rate of pay shall continue.

For those who have had an advance of honoraria this agreement would not apply until such times as they were due an honorarium payment or monies had been returned to the union?

NOTE:

Cost of the Vehicle Maintenance Allowance	£ 87,600.00
Cost of Honorarium	£ 47,342.16
Increase in Cost	£ 40,257.84

CAR ALLOWANCES

The car allowance is to assist an official in purchasing a vehicle. Clearly a variety of vehicles are purchased and used for domestic and union business. In some cases an additional vehicle has to be purchased to allow an official to undertake union activities.

The union accepts the requirement of a vehicle to undertake union duties for some officials and that assistance should be given to compensate for that additional use.

Amounts paid at present to officials are:

Regional Officials	£ 1904.50 **
Executive Council Members	£ 3809.00

** *This also includes Sectional Secretaries and Chairs*

It is also clear that depending on personnel choice or the geography of where an official lives can determine the type and use of the vehicle.

Recommendation

The members of the Finance Sub-Committee having given consideration to the options and recommendations of the National Treasurer have agreed the following:

A. That the method of Car Allowance Payment should continue in its present form.

B. The linkage will be that of the Retail Price Index, which should give a more realistic and accurate form of linkage than the Pay Formula.

C. The level of payment should continue to reflect the positions held by Officials. However the level of differential will decrease.

D. The amount of Car Allowance paid to Officials will increase to the following:

Regional Officials*	£3,000.00
Executive Council Members	£4,500.00

* *This also includes Sectional Secretaries and Chairs.*

E. Officials may on request receive an advance of Car Allowance, repayment of which on retirement is at the discretion of the General Secretary.

F. The Car Allowance will be paid at the beginning of each year.

CHILDCARE

The union accepts responsibility with regard to officials and the expenditure for childcare, which they incur on behalf of the union when undertaking union duties. However we must also be conscious of accountability and legal liability.

The Children Act 1999 (Part X) aims to protect children, to reassure parents/guardians and ensure acceptable standards of childcare for children.

The Children Act requires childminders who look after children under eight years of age, for reward and for a period exceeding two hours in any day to register with their Local Authority. Failure to register whilst childminding in such circumstances is an offence.

Parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and step-parents are exempt from registration as is someone employed by the parent to look after a child in the child's own home (nanny). However legislation proceeds on the basis that such informal, family arrangements, would not involve payment and the registration provisions do not apply.

Accordingly, no criminal offence would be committed and there would be no question of the union facing civil proceedings, as the union would not have funded the arrangement. Where, however, the claim is made to fund childcare by a family member who is seeking payment, the union would face the same potential civil liabilities as would apply in relation to unregistered childminder.

Recommendations:

To put into place a form that officials/members would be required to fill in to obtain childcare reimbursement.

Reimbursement will be made with regard to additional carer expenses incurred in excess of those borne in normal circumstances, that is to say extra expenses paid out specifically in order to undertake official union business.

Registered Child Minder

A payment up to £25 per day for one

cared child or £40 per day for two and thereafter, £12 for each additional cared for child.

The above reimbursement to be paid only on production of a receipt by a registered childminder.

Carer/Dependant Responsibilities

Consideration should be given as to whether payment should be extended to those with carer/dependant responsibilities. Such consideration must take into account the implications, legal or otherwise on the adoption of any such scheme to the union.

On satisfactory conclusion of the above, the union to include both child and dependant care for payment and thereby change the name to Dependant Care.

Rates to be defined/endorsed by the Finance Sub Committee on agreement of this recommendation.

Allowances to be reviewed on an annual basis by the Finance Sub Committee. Recommendations to be brought before Executive Council.

To put into place a form that officials/members would be required to fill in to obtain reimbursement for both Dependant Care and Childcare.

PHONES

At the present there is a total variance across the country with regard to the payment, reimbursement of phone calls. Including the payment of rental and line. The PSA agreement with the Inland Revenue does not incorporate Brigade Officials.

Recommendations:

1. Further discussion to take place with the Inland Revenue.

2. Full payment of phone invoice for Executive Council Members and Regional Officials.

3. Payment of installation and line rental for Brigade Officials, who would have a separate phone line for union business calls only. This would resolve any tax liability for the union.

Or

4. Alternatively, payment of line rental and all union calls to be identified for payment purposes.

Summary:

1. Officials will receive subsistence levels as indicated previously within this report.

2. Officials will receive a fuel/mileage rate as indicated previously within this report.

3. Executive Council Members and Regional Officials will receive an allowance for maintenance of their vehicles in place of an honorarium.

4. A car allowance will be paid to those officials as indicated subject to the recommendations within this report.

5. Childcare and Dependant Care recommendations and indicated allowances as per this report

6. Phone bills/invoices to be paid as per recommendations within this report.

INVESTMENT

The Union must continue to invest and diversify to secure its present and financial future.

Recommendation:

A further discussion to take place between the General Secretary and National Treasurer to discuss and explore further options available to the Union regards investment. Those investments made on behalf of the Union are to be socially, morally and politically acceptable to the Union's policies and beliefs.

CREDIT UNION

It is true to say that credit unions are not a new idea and have been in operation in several brigades for some time. In fact credit unions began as a result of poverty in farming communities in Germany around 1850.

A credit union is a non-profit making financial organisation registered under the Credit Union Act 1979. They are registered with and monitored by the Registry of Friendly Societies and are owned and controlled by the members on the basis of one member one vote.

Volunteers, who are elected at the Annual General Meeting, would run the credit union. Accounts would be audited each year by an independent accountant and supply the registry with a copy of the audited accounts plus an annual return. A fidelity bond (Insurance) must be purchased each year to protect the member's savings.

Training would be required and may be provided by ABCUL Association of British Credit Unions Ltd or other similar body, which may take several months and 20 to 30 volunteers to undertake such training. The commitment required to organise and sustain the running of a credit union is substantial, however Unity Trust can undertake the administration on behalf of the union if that is our wish.

A credit union would encourage members to save money by providing savings facilities at low cost credit. Credit for the benefit of our members at a fair and reasonable rate of interest, which is indirectly under their control.

Recommendation:

That further consideration is given to the instigation of a Credit Union, researching thoroughly the feasibility, practical application and management of a Credit Union for the benefit of all Fire Brigades Union members. All recommendations to be brought before the Executive Council.

This report has been compiled to take our union forward and rectify the problems that have been highlighted in the past. This report is only part of the continuing process of change that needs to take place.

The union must acknowledge and accept the role of officials has changed at all levels, and that increasing demands are being made of them. It is with that in mind that this report has been complied to reflect the commitment and workload of our officials within the confines that we as a union must operate.

BRIGADE OFFICIALS

We will have dealt with various forms of financial allowances in the previous section but there is still a need to address further anomalies within our structure.

Officials of our Union have for a number of years received varied and in most cases limited financial reimbursement for the work they choose to undertake on behalf of the Fire Brigades Union.

Brigade Officials in most Regions do receive allowances and additional payments, but there are inconsistencies. There is no standardisation of monies paid, reason for such payments or who receives these benefits, although in the main it is the Brigade Secretary and Chair. Once again we appear to be relying on a Region's ability to pay or their wish to do so.

However, we have through Regions extended payment of allowances to Brigade Officials and therefore whether a decision is taken to standardise these payments or not, if they continue to be paid by Regions we must in my opinion formalise and thereby re-negotiate the PSA with the Inland Revenue, but consideration must be given to the obvious implications of this decision.

PSA: Pay As You Earn Settlement Agreement

This Agreement reached with the Inland Revenue in 1983 deals with the tax liability paid by the Union in relation to the car allowance and honorarium received by Executive Council Members and Regional Officials. The PSA does not include Brigade Officials, as these payments were not intended for them.

Amounts paid to Brigade Officials do vary, for example:

Region 1. No additional allowances or benefits paid.

Region 2. Regional Executive Members receive a car allowance of £100 per year.

Region 3. Brigade Membership Secretaries receive £360 per year.

Region 4. Brigade Officials receive:

a. A car allowance of £150 per year.

b. An honorarium of £250 per year.

Regional Officers Representative receives:

a. An honorarium of £250 per year.

Divisional Officials Brigade Committee Members receive:

a. An honorarium of £60 per year.

Region 5. Regional Committee Members receive:

a. Annual payment of £150 per year.

b. An honorarium of £320 per year.

Region 6. Brigade Secretary, Chair, and Membership Secretary receive a car allowance of £400 per year.

Region 7. Brigade Secretaries receive:

a. An honorarium of £480 per year.

b. A car allowance of £520 per year.

Brigade Chairs receive:

a. An honorarium of £280 per year.

Regional Representatives of National Committees receive an honorarium of £280 per year.

Brigade Membership Secretaries receive an honorarium of £400 per year.

Region 8. The membership commission received by each Brigade is divided equally between the three Brigade Officials, Brigade Secretary, Brigade Chair and Brigade Membership Secretary. I have projected the figures giving an indication/example of the amounts received over a 12 month period.

North Wales

Each Official as indicated will receive approximately £1,184.32 per year.

Mid & West Wales

Each Official as indicated will receive approximately £1,491.36.

South Wales

Each Official as indicated will receive approximately £1,961.33.

Region 9. Four Brigade Officials receive:

a. A car allowance of £1,000 per year.

b. An honorarium of £200 per year.

Region 10. No additional allowances or benefits paid.

Region 11. London Regional Committee Members receive:

a. A car allowance of £400 per year.

b. An honorarium of £259.80 per year.

Region 12. Membership Commission is divided on a pro rata basis between the four Brigades and then paid to the three principle Brigade Officials, Secretary, Chair, and Membership Secretary. The example given is based on one quarter that of the 30th Jun 01, I have projected those figurers giving an indication/example of the amounts received over 12 months.

Surrey

£999.72 per quarter divided by

40%	30% and	30%	equals
£1,599.52,	£1,199.68,	£1,199.68	per year.

East Sussex

£737.66 per quarter divided by

50%	40% and	10%	equals
£1,475.32,	£1,180.24,	£295.08	per year.

West Sussex

£562.11 per quarter divided by

33.3% x 3 equals

£749.48 per year.

Kent

£1,006.11 per quarter divided by

40%	35% and	25%	equals
£1,609.60,	£1,408.56,	£1,006.32	per year.

Region 13. Brigade Membership Secretaries receive an honorarium of £140 per year.

Region 14. Brigade Membership Secretaries are paid an allowance of £400.00 per year. This is to cover telephone, subsistence and travel.

To achieve a standard of allowances received by Brigade Officials throughout the 13 Regions may cause those, who, for a number of years have received allowances to feel dissatisfied, whereas those Officials who are being disadvantaged at present will clearly benefit.

Our primary consideration or objective has to be that irrespective of the amounts paid, Officials holding identical positions within the Union receive the same amount and form of allowance and that the appropriate agreement is reached with the Inland Revenue.

Summary:

The principle of payments to Brigade Officials has been clearly established by Regions. The degree of payment does vary considerably as is indicated. Our present agreement with the Inland Revenue does not extend to and thereby include Brigade Officials. By determining whether a payment should be made will undoubtedly cause reaction with or by some of our Officials. But we will have created a form of allowance that is received and benefits the vast majority of Brigade Officials in the country.

Recommendation:

That a Car Allowance shall be paid to the following Officials:

Brigade Secretaries and Chairs to receive a payment of £850.00 per year.

This allowance to be linked to the retail price index and paid to Officials during the first week of January of each year they are in office.

Brigade Membership Secretaries to receive an honoraria payment of £75.00 per quarter.

Important Note

The Union now has agreement with the Inland Revenue on one important element of reimbursement of expenses to Officials. Work is progressing to ensure that all of our payment of expenses meets the necessary Inland Revenue rules and regulations.

- **Information Technology**

  Review ongoing, it is again the intention to provide a level playing field to all regions in terms of the quality and capability of the IT technology the Union is able to provide.

- **Regional Office Equipment**

  APT audit available. For the first time it is hoped to shortly be able to list, and identify the IT equipment ‘held’ by the Union.

THE IMPLEMENTATION LANDSCAPE

Implementation Programme

This report sets out a number of controversial and challenging ideas and proposals for the future of our Trade Union. In truth many have been spoken of from time to time in various places. The process of with some of the above it needs to begin sooner rather than later. The challenges external to the Union are already gathering just over the horizon. It must be stressed that this report is not one that seeks to unnecessarily criticize. Most of what this Union has achieved and does day to day is to be enthusiastically congratulated. However this juncture does give us an opportunity to discuss and enact the above changes.

There is no way that the above proposals can or would be progressed in anything other than an open, democratic and mature way. The Executive Council believe them to be for the best in the medium to long term. The report is innovative even radical on criticism ought to be constructive and broad based. To pursue narrow or even personal agendas would be wrong and would miss the point of this work and opportunity.

If this report is to be progressed, and that decision is for Annual Conference 2002, then that will only be only the beginning. The proposals here will require rule changes, information seminars, consultation, and ‘taking people’ with us. The Executive Council should establish an Implementation Sub-Committee to ensure the smooth transition from the ‘old’ to the ‘new’ proposals, within a time-span that is appropriate to the Union. Further the General Secretary should continue to ensure the Union Officials expenses meet Inland Revenue requirements. It is thought that the bulk if not all of this work could be done and in place no later than January 2005.

The Union must acknowledge and accept that the role of Officials has changed at all levels and that increasing demands are being made of them. It is with that in mind that this report has been compiled to reflect the commitment and workload of our Officials within the confines that we as a Union must operate.

The Executive Council therefore ask you to endorse this report and with your collective support commend it to the Membership.

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