

Industrial Relations

Purpose

To update the Fire Services Management Committee on the potential for industrial unrest.

Summary

This paper is for information and briefly describes any current industrial relations issues.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the issues set out in the paper.

Action

This report is for information.

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Background

1. As far as uniformed operational staff from firefighter to Chief Fire Officer level are concerned they are in the main represented by one of four unions specific to the fire service – the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), the Fire Officers Association (FOA) the Retained Firefighters Union (RFU) and the Association Principal Fire Officers (APFO).

Pension scheme reform

2. The Government's pension reform proposals are now moving in to the next formal stage. The spotlight will therefore shortly return to two of the most contentious issues – further increase in the employee contribution rate and the normal pension age review.
3. Should the unions remain aggrieved the risk of potential industrial unrest could return.
4. As far as industrial relations are concerned, Members will recall that the LGA worked closely with all parties on the first stage of this work, which moved forward without recourse to industrial unrest. We shall endeavour to do so again.

National issues

5. There are no national issues with short term industrial relations implications at the present time.

Local issues

6. Since the last meeting of the FSMC in September, there has been one formal conciliation request for assistance in resolution of a dispute at local level. In addition, we continue to support one fire and rescue service involved in a multi-issue dispute.
7. There has however been a considerable amount of informal work with a number of fire and rescue services.

Conclusion

8. Members are asked to note the content of this report.