



**PASSENGER
TRANSPORT SECTOR**

FIRST IMPOSES ZERO % ON PAY

JUNE 2009



Pics: First London pickets in 2008

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Passenger News

A NOTE FROM
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At a national meeting with First, Deputy MD of UK Bus, Dave Kaye announced a ZERO % pay freeze across the group. Naturally, this was firmly rebutted there and discussed at a subsequent National Delegate Conference.

First UK Rail unions do not seem to have been told that ZERO pay will be enforced.

Given the variations in pay settlement dates across the group only certain subsidiaries are now facing the challenge of ZERO%. First Glasgow is in the second year of a three-year deal worth 4%, 4% and 3.3%. Others are in a similar position.

But all First busworkers will want to be kept informed. Therefore, I have asked servicing officers to alert me to all developments and we are thus able to provide the initial reports in this bulletin. Updates will be issued as the situation unfolds.

FIRST ABERDEEN

Tommy Campbell (Aberdeen Office) reports:



Aberdeen was offered 0% by a new M.D. and the matter was reported to three separate mass meetings with union members on May 27th. The formal local anniversary date is 1st April and the branch is going to ballot shortly.

First Aberdeen wrote to all of its drivers in what it said was a bid to avert possible strike action. Their letter said: "There is no new money available to fund a pay increase and any pay award would need to be funded through the modernisation of terms and conditions of employment."

FirstGroup UK bus profits increased from £122 million to £134 million, its profit margin was up to 11.3% and passenger revenues were up 7.4% at a time when oil prices came down. "No new money", eh????

FIRST ESSEX

Steve Linger (Chelmsford Office) reports: First Essex covers Chelmsford, Colchester, Braintree, Clacton, Harwich, Basildon and Hadleigh. We have concluded negotiations, resulting in a final offer of nothing!

I issued a notice on behalf of both Negotiating Committees (North & South Essex), as I put it, "to give a further update on the 2009 Pay 'Award' or in this case 'Non Award'!" Members were advised that many First Bus Companies within the UK are also pursuing a Strike Action Ballot.

I personally hand delivered, on 3rd June, the notice of ballot to the MD. The ERBS ballot will open on Thursday 11th June and close midday on Wednesday 1st of July. We expect a thumping mandate for strike action will be provided for sometime in July.

Colchester has had a depot "surgery" with the MD who re-iterated the line that First have no money to spend on wage increases. The very clear feeling exists that "the MDs have had their power stripped from them and Dave Kaye is pulling all the strings of the puppets".

FIRST WEST YORKSHIRE

Phil Bown (Bradford Office) reports:

Meetings with the MD have not yet been exhausted but a similar line as elsewhere seems apparent for Leeds, Halifax yellow school bus, York 'ftr' hosts and engineering. I will report as soon as matters are clear.

HAMPSHIRE AND DORSET

Two meetings at Hampshire and Dorset point to a 0% pay "offer". The next meeting is on 15th June, when matters will come to a head.

FIRST SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Steve Clark (Leeds Office) reports: The anniversary date is 1st April. Failure to agree over a 0% pay offer was reached on 13th May. (Another, separate dispute on a local matter is also under way.) Ballot papers are due to arrive any day now. The agreement with the company covers depots 729 drivers in Olive Grove, Sheffield, 269 in Rotherham and 317 in Doncaster. There is no doubt about the outcome.

Pic: the mammoth summer 2004 strike in South Yorkshire



FIRST LONDON: Watch this space: pay talks open in mid-June!!!!!!



First London pickets in 2008; buses parked up!

A MESSAGE FROM A SHOP STEWARD:

"I sit in on so called disciplinary 'interviews' and am growing concerned with the way First are treating our members. All managers seem to have been given the order to get out the big sticks. They are all scared of losing their own jobs. It seems to me that First won't be happy until all drivers are on sanctions - to keep us all in line."

Sheffield has put the whole disciplinary culture into collective grievance and is now conducting its own "test the water" ballot.