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Dear Matt

Thank you for your letter of 10 April noting the helpful discussions between yourselves and officials from HM Treasury and my Department.

As you know it has always been this Government's objective to reform the Firefighters' Pension Scheme so that it is fair to both firefighters and the taxpayer. There has been a lot of hard work undertaken over the past few months to look at new approaches to working longer and possible changes to the scheme design. I am particularly grateful for the collaborative way in which the FBU has worked with us and the Government Actuary's Department to look at the cost implications of extending the basis for calculating the enhanced early retirement factors down to age 55.

We are now considering this proposal across Government. While we are not yet in a position to respond positively to your suggested changes, I will inform you of the outcome of those deliberations as soon as possible.

It is important that we continue to maintain dialogue with on this and other matters. These include firefighter fitness in the light of your discussions with the employers.

BRANDON LEWIS MP