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Dear Matt

I was grateful for your prompt and constructive reply to my letter of 9 October regarding the drawing up of a set of principles to address concerns that you have raised around fitness and capability. This followed our productive discussion on Monday. I was therefore deeply disappointed to discover that almost immediately after you replied welcoming the commitment to continue dialogue, you announced a further strike date.

This action not only damages the reputation of the fire and rescue service and the Fire Brigades' Union, but creates considerable confusion for your members regarding the objectives of your strike action. This is particularly so in the light of the decision taken by your members in Scotland.

I have remained committed to dialogue throughout this process, and still do. For this reason I am happy for my officials to meet with your negotiating team in the coming week, and for me to meet again with you prior to your proposed strike date.

My office will be in touch with yours to arrange these meetings.

BRANDON LEWIS MP