

Notices of Motion

NOTICES OF MOTION

Council Members are asked to consider the under mentioned Motions:-

(i) Ofsted Judgement

This Council deeply regrets the recent Ofsted judgement that “there are widespread and serious failures that leave children unsafe and mean that the welfare of children looked after is not adequately safeguarded or promoted” and resolves to do all in its power to realise Ofsted’s expectation “that all children and young people receive the level of help, care and protection that will ensure their safety and help prepare them for adult life.”

Councillor P. Wood
Councillor G.E. Howe
Councillor R. Francis
Councillor M. Dixon

(ii) Defending the Right to Strike

This Council notes:

- In February 2015 the United Nations agency the International Labour Organisation (ILO) reaffirmed its belief that ‘without protecting a right to strike, Freedom of Association, in particular the right to organise activities for the purpose of promoting and protecting workers’ interests, cannot be fully realised.’
- In July 2015 the Conservative Government announced its intention to change legislation affecting trade unions and their members to make it harder to win ballots for industrial action. This will only be lawful if there is a 50% turnout among trade union members entitled to vote in addition to a simple majority voting for industrial action.
- The Conservatives seek a further requirement for those working in ‘important public services’ to secure the support of 40% of all trade union members. Non-voters will be counted as ‘against’ industrial action which is contrary to ILO guidance. This means that on a 50% turnout, 80% will have to vote for industrial action for it to be lawful in many public services.
- No such thresholds apply to elections in local government, for police and crime commissioners, or in European or Westminster elections.
- The government has refused the request of trade unions to make electronic balloting legally permissible and increase turnout this way.

This Council further notes:

- The proposed Conservative legislation will also introduce greater restrictions for picketing. These include requirements on unions to inform the police of the name of a picket supervisor and ensure that they have a letter of authorisation they must be required to carry, inform the police of how many will be expected to attend a picket line and what banners or materials will be used as well as notify the police of details of how trade unions intend to use social media during a dispute.
- The Trade Union Bill has been criticised by human rights organisations Liberty, Amnesty International and the British Institute of Human Rights arguing it “would hamper people’s basic rights to protest and shift even more power from the employee to the employer.”
- The Conservative government wants to remove the ban for employers to employ agency workers during a period of lawful industrial action
- The government want to grant Ministers the power to reduce the amount of facilities time agreed by employer and the workforce which is in place to ensure adequate workplace representation.
- Trade unions take industrial action for a wide range of reasons including defending wages and pensions, conditions at work and safety.

This Council believes:

- The right to strike and protest are fundamental rights which should be respected in a free and democratic society
- The Conservative government’s Bill will undermine constructive employment relations across Wearside and that harmonious industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement and not additional legal restrictions to trade union members
- The government’s Trade Union Bill is part of a disturbing trend to erode civil liberties and inhibit the right to speak out or protest against the government
- The Conservative government’s Trade Union Bill is a politically-motivated attack on trade unions and could have negative consequences for working people in Sunderland and society

This Council resolves to:

- Oppose the Trade Union Bill 2015-16
- To write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating the council’s opposition to their Trade Union Bill and to participate in any consultations
- Support the Northern TUC and civil liberties groups in campaigning to defend the right to strike and oppose the Trade Union Bill
- Continue to value the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation through trade unions in Sunderland

Councillor P. Watson
Councillor D. Allan
Councillor H. Trueman
Councillor D. MacKnight
Councillor M. Speding
Councillor M. Mordey
Councillor P. Gibson
Councillor E. Gibson
Councillor A. Lawson
Councillor P. Smith

