

UNISON's top

10 asks for councils

By 2015/16, £11.3bn will have been slashed from central government grants to councils. UNISON is deeply concerned about the human cost of these cuts.

The responsibility for the dismantling of local services lies squarely with the UK government. UNISON believes in strong local government, central to the life of local places. UNISON wants to work with councils to implement progressive policies, but we also want councillors to join with us to demand a fairer deal from government.

UNISON's 'top ten' asks for councils are:

- 1 Fair pay not poverty pay:** Advocate and budget for decent annual pay awards to redress real terms pay cuts. Include the Living Wage as the minimum rate for direct and contracted out workers – they're worth it!
- 2 Value your own workforce:** Employ your own staff and trust their expertise. Reduce spending on agency staffing and consultants' fees.
- 3 Employment relations:** Uphold good industrial relations. Resist attacks on trade union facility time. Provide adequate time and support for the vital role of your UNISON representatives – they save the council time and money, and ensure workers have a voice and a stake at work.
- 4 Quality service delivery:** Support a strong core of in-house services to maintain your flexibility, control and accountability. Always include a public sector comparator with a service improvement plan in any options appraisal.
- 5 Value for money:** Scrutinise outsourced contracts regularly and consider insourcing. Learn from other councils' experiences with contractors. Introduce a local 'community right to call in' failing contracts for scrutiny.

- 6 Collaboration not 'co-operatives':** Devolve power to council-employed staff to work collaboratively with the communities they serve. Reject bogus co-operatives that are just a Trojan horse for more privatisation.
- 7 Open government:** Establish a presumption in favour of full transparency and against withholding information on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.
- 8 Maximise resources:** Resist offers of council tax freeze grant that undermine future spending. Raising council tax increases your tax base now and for future years. Bring the new homes bonus grant into your base budget – it is for you to decide how to spend it.
- 9 Prudent financing:** Review earmarked reserves. Ensure reserves are prudent but not excessive. Finance capital investment by borrowing while interest rates are at an all-time low. Minimise the use of revenue to pay for capital expenditure.
- 10 Ethical care:** Adopt UNISON's Ethical Care Charter for homecare commissioning and extend its principles to other types of social care.

We also want all councillors to work with us locally and nationally to take the local government cause to Westminster. Together we can:

Stand up for our local democracy and quality services

Join in the campaign for a new system of needs-based funding for local government, backed by greater resources and greater powers

Speak out about the devastating human cost of central government cuts in our local communities

Join UNISON's mailing list for councillors and receive regular news and briefings – just email ServiceDelivery@unison.co.uk and ask to be added.

See below for three simple ways that councillors can join UNISON

Three simple ways to join UNISON today and get essential cover wherever you work



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0800 171 2193



Ask your UNISON rep
for an application form