



Service Group Conference

Decisions

**14 – 15 June 2015
Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre
Glasgow**

1. Local Government NJC Pay Campaign

Withdrawn

3. Outsourcing and Procurement within Local Government

Carried as Amended: 3.1

Conference we welcome the UNISON model procurement agreement, and we know that a number of Councils have now signed such a procurement agreement.

Conference notes that the combination of privatisation and cuts leads to the fragmentation of local services. By getting involved at the beginning of the process it will ensure that information from the employer is shared with UNISON and the affected employees. Since the 2014 Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) Regulations further weaken protections for transferring staff, it is vital that early intervention happens before any services are outsourced.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:-

- 1) Support Branches to get local Employers to sign a model procurement agreement with the local UNISON Branch;
- 2) Promote the ability of in-house services to try and stop any outsourcing;
- 3) Promote the ability of in-house services tendering for external contracts;
- 4) Help Branches to use legislation around social value and to ensure robust social and ethical policies, are adhered to on areas such as the Ethical Care Charter to help to campaign against outsourcing;
- 5) Give full backing to branches fighting to defend the unions policy, including supporting branches requesting industrial action ballots over the enforced change of identity of the employer;
- 6) Proactively bring together branches that are fighting privatisation to seek to co ordinate campaigns on a wider than branch basis.

4. Stop the mutualisation of the fire service

Carried

Service Group Conference notes with deep concern the former government's announcement of plans to turn fire authorities into mutuals.

Under the plans, the government would change the law to allow fire authorities to set themselves up as independent social enterprise companies outside the public sector. They would then be contracted to provide geographical fire cover while also being free to offer their services to the private sector.

Conference notes with concern that mutualisation has also been put forward in other areas of local government and the NHS. We believe that this is a further means of delivering massive cuts. While public funding is guaranteed for the first three years of

the existence of a mutual, after that it has to raise its own funding. It would then have to compete with private providers leading to inevitable pressure to make cuts in service levels, jobs and pay.

Conference notes that there have already been fire station closures, cuts and significant jobs losses amongst both operational and non-operational fire service staff under the last government. Support services such as fire fighter training have been privatised. Cleveland Fire and Rescue is already planning to become a mutual.

Conference believes that there is no support for privatisation amongst the public and that mutualisation is a means of doing this by stealth. Claims that mutualisation gives workers more control over the service are myths designed to undermine resistance by the trade unions.

Conference notes with concern that some Labour-led local councils are pushing for mutualisation of local services.

Conference reaffirms its call made at the 2014 Local Government Service Group Conference on the Service Group Executive to:-

- 1) Continue to support branches, including those with members in the fire service to campaign for the retention of services to be delivered in-house;
- 2) Continue to publicise the impact of mutualisation on members' terms and conditions and the services they deliver, across all local government branches, and;
- 3) Continue to publish guidance, and to offer support to branches facing the imposition of mutualisation by their employers.

Conference resolves to campaign against the mutualisation of the fire service at both national and local levels and to work closely with other trade unions in particular the Fire Brigades Union.

Composite A (Motions 5, 17 and related amendments) - Local Government Cuts - the impact on jobs and services

Carried as Amended: A.1, A.2

Conference condemns the continued attacks on the funding of Local Government. These cuts are the biggest threat to the continued survival of the concept of locally provided services controlled by democratically elected councils.

Conference deplores the local government cuts across the UK, leading to:-

- 1) continuing cuts to local government services;
- 2) continued attacks on terms and conditions;
- 3) mass redundancies and loss of jobs;

- 4) damage to front line services;
- 5) receding scope of service provision;
- 6) impact on the social fabric of local communities;
- 7) damage to local economies.

The Conservative-led Coalition is using the 2008 banking crisis and the subsequent failure to eliminate the deficit by 2015 to justify further drastic cuts to public expenditure in an ideological move to create a 'smaller state'.

Conference notes the continued failure of the 'austerity' agenda, including the £25bn shortfall in income tax receipts, the £7.4bn shortfall in National Insurance receipts and the £8.5bn shortfall in Corporation Tax receipts in the Government's 2010 income projections for 2013/14. Conference also notes the success of anti austerity parties in Europe.

The shortfall in national insurance receipts is driven by low pay, zero hours contracts and employers avoiding payment of employer NI contributions through the use of self employment, companies and agencies.

Meanwhile austerity cuts are providing an excuse for councils to continue to outsource services, or develop shared services with other public bodies and private organisations. Within some regions Combined Authorities have been established as a vehicle to access further funding, however it is imperative that these do not undermine local authorities.

Councils are also using the cuts as a reason to use volunteers, and again we must ensure that these volunteers are not used to replace staff.

Experience teaches us that outsourcing, privatisation and shared services does not always reap the rewards of reducing costs and improving services that councils claim. In fact the quality of service normally suffers especially when the private sector is involved.

Local Government is under attack on many fronts, and any attempts to undermine its importance must remain a priority for our union. We must fight to protect local democratic accountability and the services our members provide to the communities where they live, work and serve.

The tidal wave of cuts can seem overpowering and it is important therefore that we celebrate victories. In Tower Hamlets for example campaigns involving nursery parents, workers, and service users succeeded this year in preventing the closure of four day care nurseries, cuts to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the closure of the African and Muslim Families Service. There will be many examples from around the country of such successes – we need to popularise the message that where we campaign and fight alongside our communities we can win.

No council service is safe from the threat of cuts in funding. The workforce faces mass redundancies, and for those that do manage to retain a job, there is an onslaught of attacks of terms and conditions as well as increased workload.

Conference welcomes the increasing vigorous campaigns that many branches have had in challenging cuts to terms and conditions and congratulates those that have successfully resisted them. Conference also welcomes the Service Group's 'Save Our Services' and Damage campaigns, which have attracted a lot of publicity, highlighting the damage done to services such as youth services, parks, libraries, street lighting, trading standards and environmental health, as well as the devastating impact caused for women by the cuts in local government funding.

Conference reaffirms its belief in the:-

- a) need for local government funding structures and settlements which provide sufficient resources to improve service provision, meet unmet need, restore the value of local government pay and restore lost working conditions;
- b) importance to the UK economy of improving services provided by local authorities which are critical to our economic performance, good health, raised levels of education and skills and which prevent the imprudent use of public money on crisis intervention.

Conference notes with grave concern that like the Tory and Lib dem councils that Labour councils are simply acting as agents of austerity and are carrying out the Tory government cuts.

Conference also deplores the announcement by the Labour Party that a future Labour government will not only NOT return the money cut from Local government funding since 2010 but will continue with the planned cuts in public sector spending.

In light of the scale of attacks on Local government this Conference recognises that it will not be an adequate strategy to simply believe that these attacks can be defeated on a branch by branch basis and that it is imperative that the union develops a new strategy.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to continue to:-

- i) Fight for:
 - a) A future direction for local government finance that is sustainable, fair, provide for equalisation, local democratic accountability and determination and which minimise avoidance and maximise ease of collection;
 - b) Resource distribution models based on need.
 - c) Reversal of all cuts implemented since 2010 and an increase in central Government funding paid for by increased taxation on the richest in society

- d) Adequate funding for local government services so that councils can continue to provide high quality services locally”
- ii) Argue for:-
 - a) A new settlement on employment and trade union rights including the repeal of the anti-trade union laws and an accompanying agenda for jobs and pay and conditions within the four UK nations;
 - b) A new workforce strategy that includes the Living Wage as the minimum pay rate, maintains equal pay proofed pay structures and provides access to high quality training and workforce development, apprenticeships and a ‘gender agenda’ to address the needs of a predominantly female workforce;
 - iii) Defend members’ jobs and terms and conditions through increasing membership, collective bargaining, political influence and including where appropriate and necessary, industrial action within UNISON’s rules and procedures;
 - iv) Urgently investigate ways of organising co-ordinated industrial action, including strike action, across branches and with other trade unions;
 - v) To proactively seek to bring together branches that are fighting cuts and attacks on terms and conditions and where possible support branches in co ordinating their campaigns;
 - vi) Provide guidance to support branches to ensure that every effort is made to protect pay and conditions and retain equal pay proofed pay structures;
 - vii) Provide guidance and support to local government branches and regional campaigns on fighting the cuts that focus attention on the central role of government spending decisions as part of the fight against cuts to local government services;
 - viii) Encourage branches and regions to publicise successful campaigns against cuts;
 - ix) Build an inclusive campaign to support our call for an alternative to the current austerity measures that are having such an adverse impact on local government;
 - x) Work with other parts of the union, other local government bodies, the TUC, civil society organisations and Labour Link to build on UNISON’s current alternative economic strategy and tackle tax evasion and avoidance and unfair means of taxation;
 - xi) Help branches to use legislation around social value to campaign against service fragmentation;
 - xii) Campaign for a ‘green agenda’ for local government to increase efficiency and create environmental sustainability Call for immediate financial measures

to increase local authority service budgets from 2016/17, including progress on the merger of Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) funds;

- xiii) Hold regional briefing seminars for UNISON members who are elected members of local authorities to equip them with the arguments to defend local services;
- xiv) Give consideration to calling for using the (debt free) money creation powers of the Bank of England to re-finance existing local authority debt, reduce capital financing costs and release revenue resources through the development of a public sector equivalent to quantitative easing.

Composite B (Motions 6 and 9) - Organising in Schools

Carried

Conference we acknowledge the importance that school based staff have within the membership of our local government branches. We also recognise the need to ensure that we continue to recruit and organise our members and potential members in schools.

Conference notes that the schools landscape has continued to change, as more and more schools move away from Local Authority control. According to the Department for Education (DfE), there are currently 3,125 academies and 252 free schools in the UK, and increasing numbers of Academies, Foundation Trusts and Free Schools have further reduced the number of democratically accountable, council-run schools across the country.

In January 2015, the House of Commons Education Committee released a report which stated that there is no proof that academies raised standards, and called on the DfE to be 'less defensive and more open about its implementation of the academies programme.' The Conservative's Free School program also appears to be struggling and a number have been forced to close due to Ofsted ruling them inadequate. This is hardly surprising when around one third have employed unqualified teachers.

Schools are undergoing budget cuts as well as changes in statutory regulations, such as the Disqualification by Association regulations brought in earlier this year, and members face an uncertain future together with increasing workloads.

With so many members in schools no longer being employed by their local authority, it is important to ensure that UNISON's visibility is strong. One way of achieving this is for Branches to have a dedicated schools officer or organiser, concentrating on recruitment and retention and visiting staff to discuss issues and pass on information. In Branches where this has been trialled membership has increased and the number of Shop Stewards in schools has also increased. This clearly demonstrates the importance of having dedicated organising capacity in schools.

Conference notes that it is vital members in schools are retained and new members are recruited. Despite government pledges that schools will be protected from cuts, some school support staff are facing redundancy or downgrading of their posts as

head teachers struggle to balance their books. These cuts are hitting a wide range of staff, from school crossing patrols through to teaching assistants.

These cuts not only affect our members, the cuts hit the quality of education and put vulnerable children at risk. The role that education plays in economic, political and social success should be acknowledged and the requisite funding provided. We therefore need to ensure we continue to campaign for increased school funding, and the need to campaign to keep those Local Education Authorities (LEA) and community schools under local control, to stop further erosion and fragmentation of education.

The composition of the education workforce contributes significantly to the national incidence of job segregation and low pay. The majority of these workers are women who suffer low pay, a lack of career opportunities and institutional discrimination that belittles their role. Whilst we have a government that continues to undermine the value of roles such as teaching assistants, by suggesting that they can be replaced by volunteers, the true worth of these employees will never be realised. This is compounded by the prevalence of part-time, casual, fixed term, term time and temporary working. Conference we need to support and organise in schools.

Conference we call on the Service Group Executive (SGE) to:-

- 1) Encourage and support branches to consider having a dedicated Schools Officer / Organiser;
- 2) Continue to produce targeted materials for schools recruitment;
- 3) Provide support and resources to regions and branches to support our members working in schools;
- 4) Mount a campaign to ensure school support staff are efficiently supported by branches;
- 5) Encourage branches to increase the number of members we recruit in schools and also increase the number of stewards, when drawing up any branch recruitment plans;
- 6) Encourage regions to support branches in trying to increase the number of UNISON steward and workplace contacts;
- 7) Campaign to ensure that adequate funding is given to schools;
- 8) Provide specific training materials/resources to branches for issues affecting school based staff, to equip branch representatives to be able to effectively represent school based members;
- 9) Continue UNISON's opposition to Academisation and the creation of Free Schools, and publicise where local campaigns have been successful.

7. Outsourcing, Pay and National Joint Council (NJC) Terms and Conditions

Carried

Conference notes with concern that local government workers pay is falling behind other public and private workers.

Many employers are trying to move away from NJC pay and terms and conditions with the result that the NJC could be left to 'wither on the vine'. The trade unions must take decisive action to prevent its collapse and suffer the unwelcome consequences that local bargaining would bring.

The role of the NJC is further weakened by the numbers of staff who are now employed by private companies as a result of outsourcing. It is therefore vital that any procurement documents ensure that staff remain on NJC pay and terms and conditions. The 2014 Transfer of Undertaking Protection of Employment (TUPE) Regulations further weaken protections for transferring staff. This often leads to deteriorating pay and terms and conditions for outsourced staff.

Conference, branches need to campaign with employers to ensure councils promote in house services as the best means to retain jobs within Local Government, to continue to strengthen the numbers directly employed on NJC pay and terms and conditions.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:-

- 1) Provide support to branches to support them to protect pay and conditions and retain equality proofed pay structures;
- 2) Work with the National Executive Council (NEC) and legal services to campaign on the continued attack on TUPE;
- 3) Campaign for the survival of the NJC as the mechanism for pay awards for staff delivering local government services;
- 4) Support branches in negotiating with new employers so that admitted body status is achieved regarding pensions before any transfer takes place;
- 5) Provide support for branches to ensure that model procurement agreements contain sections to protect NJC pay and terms and conditions.

8. Campaign for a fairer funding settlement for Local Government

Carried

This conference notes that UNISON believes that local authorities will be pushed to breaking point by the latest round of multibillion pound cuts to their funding announced in the last round of the Coalition Government's spending review.

This is despite the communities and local government minister, Kris Hopkins, view that the Government announced what he called "a fair financial settlement for

councils in 2015-16". He went on to say that "councils will face an average cut of 1.8% in spending power" and "no council would see more than a 6.4% cut".

The reality as the Local Government Association (LGA) sees it, is that "the reduction in central government grants amounted to an average 8.8% cut, around £2.6bn in cash terms".

The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (Cipfa) said that "the biggest falls in un-ringfenced spending power would be felt in London (8.01%), the North-East (7.75%) and the North-West (7.42%), while the South-East will face cuts of just 3.42%. Metropolitan councils covering major cities will see an 8.35% cut, while reductions in shire counties will average 4.65%".

The Government's continued attack on Local Government has brought to 40% the total reduction in central government support since the coalition came to power in 2010, with Councils required to make savings totaling £20 billion over the period.

It is estimated that over 500,000 jobs have been lost in Local Government since 2010, and the Office of Budget Responsibility predicts that a million more public sector jobs will be lost during the next Parliament if spending levels are maintained as they are currently.

Local Government needs a fairer funding settlement that takes account of the fact that there have been disproportionately higher cuts for the most vulnerable communities and deprived areas of the country most reliant on public funding to provide statutory services.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:-

- 1) Lobby Government for a fairer financial settlement for Local Government;
- 2) Continue to publicise the devastating cuts to Local Authority budgets and the subsequent cuts to jobs and services;
- 3) Campaign alongside the Local Government Association in support of a fairer financial settlement for Local Government.

10. Where next for Libraries and Leisure Services?

Carried

Conference notes with concern the attack libraries and leisure facilities have faced under the coalition government. As budget cuts have hit hard, councils have explored a number of options which have included: dramatically scaling back on library and leisure services, alternative models to deliver services, or closing facilities.

Libraries do more than simply loan books; they are quite often the hub of communities. In England over a third of the population visit their local library and in more deprived areas this figure rises to nearly half. Furthermore, authority ran leisure

facilities provide affordable access to many services, and the physical and mental benefits of regular exercise are well documented.

Library and leisure facilities are used by many in society and they offer a wide range of services provided by well-trained staff. During the last five years many local authorities have looked at alternative models to deliver these services, including setting up charitable trusts or moving services to an existing trust or transferring libraries to volunteer led organisations.

Within leisure a number of services are now provided outside of the local authority, which has involved staff transferring through Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). The concern for members is what this could mean in the future for their terms and conditions.

Where alternative models are sought, UNISON branches must be involved in the procurement processes, and that through negotiated procurement agreements they play a vital role in ensuring that members are represented throughout.

We must therefore continue to campaign to keep these services in-house but we must also understand the integral role that procurement and commissioning has in deciding who runs these services in the future, and the role that UNISON branches can play in ensuring that negotiated procurement policies can influence the outcome of tendering processes.

A staggering 324 libraries have been closed under this government, and we have also seen a far greater use of volunteers either supporting facilities or running them wholesale. This is something we must continue to campaign against.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:-

- 1) Continue to provide materials that branches can use to campaign against the closure of services such as library and leisure;
- 2) Encourage branches to work with employers so that there is an agreed procurement policy that ensure branches are involved throughout the entire commissioning process;
- 3) Encourage regions to work with branches to train reps regarding procurement, commissioning and alternative models of delivery.

11. Defending youth services and youth workers

Carried

Conference notes the massive cuts that youth and community services suffered under the 2010-2015 Government. Conference welcomes the Local Government Service Group's 2014 'Damage' report, highlighting the scale and impact of those cuts. The publicity that the report attracted shows clearly the breadth of support in the UK for high quality, properly funded youth services.

The report found that between 2012 and 2014 alone, at least 2000 youth service jobs were lost, 350 youth centres closed, 41,000 youth services places for young people were cut, and 35,000 hours of youth service outreach work disappeared. UNISON's figures show that at least £260m has been cut from youth services since 2010. Since publication of the report, the cuts have got even worse, with many councils, for example Coventry, Staffordshire, Carmarthenshire and Havering, announcing major cuts.

Conference believes that youth services are an essential part of society, helping young people play an active role in their communities, avoid crime and substance abuse, improve their education, and gain employment. Often young people who are from the most vulnerable groups are the ones who gain most from youth services.

UNISON members participating in the 'Damage' report made clear the impact of youth service cuts. We will see more outsourcing, an increase in services provided by unqualified staff, more mental health problems among young people (one respondent predicted "Young people's deaths from mental health issues will rise"), higher youth unemployment, and increased poverty. Young people will become disengaged, and marginalised by society.

Conference believes that there should be a statutory duty on relevant local authorities to provide a distinct youth service. But such a duty would be meaningless without the necessary resources, and local authorities must be properly funded by the UK's governments, included in the devolved nations, to provide these services.

Conference further believes that the human relationships between service users and service providers are particularly vital in youth services. These services cannot function without properly trained and respected staff who can develop bonds of understanding, trust and empathy with young people. It is therefore vital that all workers providing youth services are fairly paid, properly treated at work, and given full access to training, including varied routes to the important JNC qualification.

Because youth and community workers are so dispersed, they can be a difficult group to organise, but given the scale of the challenges they face, it is vital that UNISON organises this group of workers.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive (SGE) to continue its campaign for youth services which are high quality, kept in-house, and provided by fairly paid workers. In particular, Conference calls on the SGE to:-

- 1) Press for an early meeting with relevant ministers in the newly-elected UK Government, whichever party or parties have formed it;
- 2) Press for fair funding for youth services backed by a statutory duty;
- 3) Ensure youth services are a key part of the broader Service Group strategies for pay and organising;

- 4) Ensure youth services are a key part of the Service Group's 'Save Our Services' campaign;
- 5) Campaign to raise awareness of the broad benefits of youth services.

12. Food Standards Agency - Pay, Terms and Conditions

Carried

Conference notes that our members employed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and its contractors, work in some of the worst conditions in Europe. They face increasing bullying, harassment and attacks in the workplace, as well as the erosion of their pay and benefits.

Conference also notes that the deregulators and industry lobbyists working in the European Union (EU) are trying to undermine our members' terms and conditions further as their roles are defined as official controls under the European regulatory framework.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to defend our members' terms conditions, negotiated with the FSA and as a regulatory function within the EU by:-

- 1) Opposing privatisation and deregulation;
- 2) Increasing our campaigning presence in the EU to maintain and improve the terms and conditions of workers employed by the FSA as meat inspectors and official veterinarians;
- 3) Opposing performance related pay;
- 4) Campaigning to end bullying and harassment in the workplace;
- 5) Supporting an enhanced animal welfare role for our members in being the independent voice to end animal welfare abuses in slaughterhouses as well as safeguarding their role;
- 6) Working closer with UNISON members in trading standards and environmental health on quality, health and animal welfare and to maintain their role as a local government service;
- 7) Educating the public and policy makers on the "journey of meat";
- 8) Developing a "Meat Charter" showing the role of our members across the service group and asking local authorities and slaughterhouses to sign-up.

13. Pay Consultation Procedures

Withdrawn

14. Facility Time

Carried as Amended: 14.1, 14.2

Conference notes with alarm the continuing attacks on facility time in local government over the last year. These attacks are part of a political attack on trade unions in local government.

In 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued revised guidelines on data transparency, which require local authorities and fire and rescue authorities to publish a range of information on trade union reps and facility time. Conference is concerned that some local authorities are likely to implement the revised data transparency guidance even more harshly than intended.

Conference believes that facility time is fundamental to the work trade unions do. By granting facility time, employers enable trade unions to represent members with workplace concerns, develop genuine workplace partnerships, resolve local issues quickly and ensure that employees have a real voice in what happens at work. Conference believes that facility time provides excellent 'value for money'.

Conference welcomes the work across the Local Government Service Group, at UK, Regional and branch levels, to defend facility time. This includes publishing research on its value and benefits, lobbying politicians, engaging with local media about attacks on facility time, producing and revising guidance on defending facility time, and working with Labour Link to influence Labour to defend it. There is clearly much more work that can and must be done.

Conference further believes that while attacks on facility time are a growing problem across UNISON's different membership groups, it is most acute in relation to outsourced members. While privatisation and outsourcing are accelerating in local government, 'core' employers are becoming increasingly restrictive about union reps using facility time in outsourced areas.

Conference also notes concerns made clear at the 2013 and 2014 Local Government Conferences, about future support for branches whose facility time is cut. Conference notes that this matter was referred to the National Executive Council (NEC's) Development & Organisation (D&O) Committee. The Organisation and Membership (O&M) Sub Committee of the D&O conducted a wide-ranging survey of branches, which found that following such a cut, additional sources of funding like the Regional Pool and the Fighting Fund are being under-used. Only around a quarter of branches had applied to the Regional Pool, and only around a fifth of branches had applied to the Fighting Fund, for extra resources to help the branch maintain its representation, negotiating and organising activities. Most applications were successful. Conference believes that these sources of funding should be highlighted and promoted much more.

Conference further notes that among the outcomes of the O&M's investigation were resolutions to provide guidance to help branches ensure that facility time transfers with TUPE outsourced employers, develop organising approaches to overcoming loss of facility time, ensure Regions take account of facility time cuts when assigning Regional resources, reissue and simplify guidance on applying for the Fighting Fund

and Regional Pool, facilitate pooling of branch resources and bids for funding, offer flexible and expanded training for stewards, issue advice about considering funding someone to carry out trade union work where facility time is lost, and continue to work with Labour Link to campaign for a legal right to facility time.

Conference believes that while branches should have access to as many resources as possible as they seek to overcome the problems caused by a loss of facility time, there also needs to be a strong organising response, with branches attracting an increasing number of activists, who are able to be trained and who can take some facility time and assist with representation, negotiation and organising.

Conference also recognises that inequities in facility time available to local government branches cause disparities in the ability of branches to recruit, organise and provide a service to members, and, where cuts are made to facility time, extreme workload pressures fall on branch officers. Inequities in resource can also lead to differences across branches' ability to contribute towards the efficacy of national industrial action.

Conference notes that Fighting Fund and Regional Pool resources can be of limited value to branches to replace lost facility time because, amongst other shortcomings, both funding sources are time-limited and fighting fund staff are not under the control of branches. Conference also notes that since the adoption of OLBA, branches must budget on certainties and the uncertainty of annualised bidding does not foster sound branch planning.

Because Conference made clear in 2013 and 2014 its desire to see the development of practical and immediate support measures for branches facing cuts to facility time, a wide range of support must be considered.

Conference therefore calls on the SGE to:-

- 1) Continue to revise and promote existing guidance on facility time, so that it is updated in line with legislation and other government actions;
- 2) Work with Regions and branches to highlight attacks on facility time in the local press and media, making clear the potential damage that could be done to services;
- 3) give full backing to branches seeking to take and taking lawful industrial action to defend facility time;
- 4) Continue to share best practice between Regions and branches regarding successful campaigns to defend facility time;
- 5) Ensure that the union's guidance on TUPE includes clear direction to negotiate for reps in 'core' employers to be able to represent outsourced workers following transfer;

- 6) Work with Learning and Organising Services to ensure that the training provided on defending facility time also covers what to do once facility time is lost;
- 7) Work with Labour Link to lobby the Labour Group of the Local Government Association, to influence Labour-run authorities to help ensure reps in 'core' employers can represent outsourced members;
- 8) Work with Regions and branches to encourage appropriate bids to the Regional Pool and Fighting Fund, to aid branches with campaigns to defend facility time and to continue representing, negotiating and organising when facility time is lost;
- 9) Call upon the NEC and its relevant committees to bring forward proposals which address the need for practical and immediate support measures to branches by remedying the shortcomings of current resource streams.

15. Privatisation and Outsourcing

Carried as Amended: 15.1

Conference notes that the neo-liberal policy agenda of local authorities increasingly acting as commissioners rather than providers of services will lead to full-scale privatisation. Local authorities run by all parties are choosing or being forced by successive central governments to see outsourcing as a way of cutting costs, leading to reduced pay, conditions and pensions for our members. The ending of the Two-Tier Code by the Coalition leaves new starters on outsourced contracts with no protection.

Conference believes that the only real savings made by privatisation and outsourcing relate to the reduction in the pay, terms and conditions of employees and the increase in multiple-tier workforces. Local authorities have a responsibility for all staff delivering its services, even if they are outsourced.

Conference also believes that through different models of service delivery, for example co-operatives, mutuals and social enterprises, local authorities are falling victim to the propaganda espoused by the Cabinet Office's public service mutual agenda. This agenda will lead to further privatisation.

Research shows that further cuts in the public sector workforce will change the shape of the UK labour market dramatically, and will have a particularly significant impact on women's employment as women make up two thirds of the public sector workforce. Already 31% of women in full time work have lost their jobs, compared to 21% of men. Women's pay will also be adversely affected, since the lowest paid workers in the public sector still earn, on average, 8% more than the lowest paid workers in the private sector – women will inevitably lose out if transferred to the private sector.

Polling carried out in 2014 for We Own It shows that the public do not trust private sector companies to do a good job running our services. The four biggest - which receive around £4 billion a year to run many of our public services - are Atos, Capita,

G4S and Serco. Only 21% of the public trust outsourcing companies; 69% of the public think such companies are motivated by maximising profit; only 22% think they are motivated by providing the best service to the public; and only 16% think there is adequate regulation of private companies running public services, compared to 59% who think more regulation is needed.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive (SGE) to work with the National Executive Council (NEC):-

- 1) To campaign for services to be delivered in-house;
- 2) To educate activists of the union on new models of service delivery such as co-operatives, mutuals and social enterprises;
- 3) To research how English regional devolution will impact on members' terms and conditions;
- 4) To work jointly with the TUC, STUC, WTUC and ICTU on national and high profile campaigns exposing the consequences of outsourcing and privatisation to the general public;
- 5) To work with Labour Link to campaign for a new mandatory two-tier workforce code;
- 6) To ask Regions to call upon Labour-run authorities in the strongest possible terms to drop a commissioning-led approach in favour of directly providing local services;
- 7) To highlight campaigns fought across the union against privatisation, and share best practice;
- 8) To campaign for procurement policies which favour in-house provision.

16. Future of Local Government

Carried as Amended: 16.1, 16.2

Conference notes: -

- 1) The damage that the Coalition's 'austerity' programme has inflicted on local services and local communities across the UK and the future damage that could occur if the plans set out in the Autumn Statement 2014 are followed;
- 2) The warnings from the Public Accounts Committee that discretionary local services may disappear and that statutory services may be unsustainable;
- 3) The continuing central control on local government exercised by the Scottish Government;
- 4) The proposed local government re-organisation in Wales;

- 5) The local government re-organisation in Northern Ireland;
- 6) The debate that has started about devolution within England and further devolution in Wales following the Referendum in Scotland;
- 7) The trend in shared services, suggestions that some district councils are not viable in the medium term and the renewed interest in unitary authorities in England in areas with county and district councils;
- 8) The contradictions between the rhetoric of 'localism' and the actions of government departments, especially Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG);
- 9) That some Councils e.g. Barnet; Northamptonshire and Bromley are looking to become commissioning only Councils, outsourcing all of their services.

Conference believes that local government and local democracy should be at the heart of our political, social and economic life and recognises the need to promote a radical and progressive new vision for the future of local democracy, local government and the local government workforce for the period 2020 onwards.

Conference believes that that vision must be built on:-

- a) Sustainable systems of local government finance across the UK;
- b) A well trained workforce, properly rewarded, delivering quality local services and involved in service design;
- c) Services that are built around the needs of service users, that are involved in the service design;
- d) The European Charter of Local Self Government;
- e) The public service ethos;
- f) Democratic accountability and open government;
- g) Transparency;
- h) Equality;
- i) Social responsibility;
- j) A rejection of the commissioning model of local government.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive:-

- l) To work with other parts of the union, other local government bodies, Labour Link, the TUC and civil society organisations to build support for:

- A) A re-evaluation of local authority funding which is fair, transparent, based on clear evidence and objectives, with the involvement of all stakeholders and beyond any notion of political interference
- B) The establishment of an independent body to advise government on the funding needs of local government and on the allocation of funding to local authorities
- C) Properly funded local services
- D) A new vision for local government
- II) To develop a model for the 2020 local government workforce, in line with NJC Committee strategy jointly with other local government bodies;
- III) To actively promote a culture of "it's right to strike" across the union;
- IV) To positively and pro-actively support all branches registering legitimate trade disputes and seeking to ballot their members for lawful industrial action in every way possible and promoting those branches which do move to take lawful industrial action;
- V) To encourage the coordination of lawful strike action across the union and with other unions wherever possible.

18. Behaviour and Violence in Schools

Carried as Amended: 18.1

Conference recognises that challenging behaviour and violence in schools can have an enormous impact on school staff. Unfortunately most of the focus on dealing with and providing support for challenging behaviour has been primarily on teachers, despite support staff facing behaviour issues in classrooms, the playground and the general school environment. Additionally, specialist support staff roles focussing on behaviour management have increased over time.

Conference welcomes UNISON's behaviour guide for support staff, which aims to give basic practical advice to all of our members.

Conference also welcomes initiatives such as the Scottish Government's involvement of UNISON on their Relationships and Behaviour Group and Education Scotland's conference on relationships and behaviour aimed at school support staff.

Conference recognises the need for schools to be inclusive and ensure access for as many children and young people as possible, some who may have challenging backgrounds. However there is also a need for balance between inclusion and dealing with challenging behaviour. Challenging behaviour should not affect the education of other children, nor should it have a negative effect on school support staff. Nor should support staff and other children have to face violence in the school environment.

Conference notes that although any staff member may have to deal with challenging behaviour, some groups of staff, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) staff, can be particularly targeted. LGBT students are also disproportionately the target for assault, verbal harassment and theft of property. Conference believes that work on challenging behaviour and violence in schools needs to be linked to work on tackling prejudice and promoting equality. Conference also notes that health and safety at work is a key trade union issue, and that union safety reps have a dramatic, positive impact on safety at work – and the more training they get, the safer the workplace.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to call for:-

- 1) Schools to adopt a policy of zero tolerance on violence;
- 2) All schools to have a behaviour policy closely linked to equality policies that covers support staff;
- 3) All school support staff to receive adequate and appropriate training on behaviour management;
- 4) Staff that report issues of challenging behaviour to be supported;
- 5) Schools to encourage reporting of challenging behaviour and discourage any blame culture that would deter staff or pupils from reporting incidents;
- 6) Branches to identify potential health and safety reps in all schools, and seek adequate training and support;
- 7) Local government self organised group (SOG) activities to be inclusive of school support staff;
- 8) Liaison with the national LGBT committee to produce guidance for branches on promoting LGBT equality in schools.

19. Workload in Schools

Carried as Amended: 19.1, 19.2, 19.3, 19.4

Conference notes that increases in workload are causing severe problems for many school support staff across the UK.

UNISON's survey of over 15,000 school support staff members showed that:-

- 1) 80.4% (10,804 respondents) said they were concerned about workload. The majority of respondents;
- 2) 74.0%, said they regularly worked unpaid overtime;
- 3) 81.0% of those working unpaid overtime said they were forced to do so as a result of increasing workloads.

Conference further notes that the schools workforce is dominated by women, particularly those in the lower paid jobs – teaching assistants, clerical and catering staff, escorts and cleaners. Many of these women also work in multiple jobs to make a living wage and/or have caring responsibilities. For these women the additional pressure to work unpaid overtime has a severe impact on both their home and working lives.

In England the Department for Education (DfE), under pressure from a dispute with some teaching unions, launched the Workload Challenge. This initiative took the views of teaching staff on unnecessary workload issues and suggestions on how problems might be resolved, with a view to making recommendations to alleviate the problems. Following an intervention from UNISON the DfE entered discussions with school support staff unions to do a similar exercise for support staff.

Meanwhile, a recent analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies of the main political parties' public spending pledges suggests that funding per pupil could fall in real terms by at least 7% and up to 12%, resulting in substantial job losses among both teaching and support staff with huge implications for remaining workers amidst generally rising pupil numbers. Indeed, the Leeds Schools Forum has projected that schools could be compelled to save some £1bn by 2020, equivalent to the loss of 20,000 full-time teaching posts.

Conference notes the Easter NUT conference passed a resolution which “deplores the Government’s inadequate proposals following its Workload Challenge. Ignoring the responses of more than 44,000 teachers who highlighted the factors which make workload excessive and unsustainable, the Government’s response was a missed opportunity”. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, schools face a 12% cut in funding regardless of the general election result in terms of Tories or Labour.

Conference notes that schools support staff often bear the brunt of cuts in schools funding through job losses, increased workloads, and attacks on terms and conditions.

NUT conference instructed their Executive to “Prepare and ballot for a national campaign of strike and non-strike action, seeking the involvement of other teaching unions, and non-teaching unions where appropriate, if no progress is made in talks with the new Government on these issues”.

Conference further notes that the schools workforce is dominated by women, particularly those in the lower paid jobs – teaching assistants, clerical and catering staff, escorts and cleaners. Many of these women also work in multiple jobs to make a living wage and/or have caring responsibilities. For these women the additional pressure to work unpaid overtime has a severe impact on both their home and working lives.

Conference calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to:-

- a) Continue to campaign for a reduction in support staff workload;
- b) Work with UK governments on strategies to reduce workload problems;
- c) Campaign to the maximum extent feasible alongside the main teaching unions, in particular the NUT, over the increasingly critical issue of schools funding;
- d) Work with the NUT and other teaching unions to develop a campaign to ensure adequate funding for schools to tackle workload issues, including being prepared to ballot for strike action and action short of strike action in line with UNISON's rules and Industrial Action procedures;
- e) Make it clear to governments that strategies for reducing workload for teachers should not negatively impact on support staff;
- f) Produce materials for branches that address workload issues including guidance on demarcation for support staff required to provide cover supervision” .

19.5

Fell

20. Devolution and Local Government

Carried as Amended: 20.1

Conference notes that the Westminster Coalition government's 'austerity' measures are causing devastation across local authorities and other UK public services. UNISON members working in them are facing redundancies, cuts to pay and conditions, increased workloads and increasing privatisation. Integration of social care and health is a further issue affecting all four UK nations. Conference recognises that these are core issues for our union and that we must work together across the four UK nations within UNISON to support and learn from each other and exercise our collective strength as one union wherever possible.

However, Conference also notes that policies relating to local government, approaches to collective bargaining and to workforce issues are taking different paths within the UK nations. The referendum on Scottish independence and the outcome of the Smith Commission, the passage of the Wales Act 2014, the Conservative Party's proposals around "English Votes for English Laws" in the Westminster Parliament and the Stormont House Agreement in Northern Ireland at the end of the year all lay the basis for further devolution of powers and greater divergence of approach to the funding and nature of local authorities and local government employment.

In addition to this, further devolution of funding and local government powers are increasingly being promoted – and occurring – within England. Combined authorities are now being established, bringing together budgets from a range of public bodies in a single governance arrangement. While they may embody the potential for more

joined-up public services and efficient use of public resources, they could also undermine local democracy and lead to further job loss and attacks on pay and conditions. City regions, shared services and combined council initiatives – such as the Tri-boroughs in London - all represent a challenge.

Conference believes that there is a common bargaining agenda across the whole union and notes that the Service Group Executive has begun to develop shared bargaining objectives to apply across the UK in respect of:-

- 1) Employment rights and industrial action legislation;
- 2) The position of women in public services;
- 3) Low pay and the Living Wage;
- 4) Equal pay;
- 5) Equalities;
- 6) Rights and conditions for part time workers;
- 7) Vulnerable and casualised work;
- 8) Access to workforce development;
- 9) Workloads and stress;
- 10) Health and safety at work;
- 11) Pensions.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive (SGE) to:-

- a) Refine the work on core bargaining objectives and priorities to apply across the UK and ensure that Regions and branches are made aware of them, working with all sectors and Regions;
- b) Develop a vision of universal, well-funded, quality local government services, recognising both commonalities and differences across the four UK nations;
- c) Work with the National Executive Council (NEC), Regions, sectors and Service Groups to take a view on combined authorities and city-region proposals outside London and on any future proposals on London governance;
- d) Ensure that all policies and committee papers are 'devolution-proofed' and reflect the common and divergent situations across the UK;

- e) Work with the Local Government Association (LGA) Employers to ensure devolution agreements include reference to workforce matters and working in partnership with trade unions.

21. Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Carried as Amended: 21.1

Conference notes that negotiations are underway between the European Union (EU) and the United States on a new trade agreement, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which could serve as a model for all future trade agreements.

TTIP will not just remove trade tariffs but would also harmonise regulatory standards; open markets in the service sector which would include public services; open up public procurement markets; introduce the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism allowing multinational investors to challenge state actions which they perceive as threatening their investments and erode the ability of national governments to act in the public interest – which could make it impossible for a future government to reverse damaging legislation. The issues are complex and conference believes that the majority of members and the general public do not understand the implications.

History has shown that women are unduly penalised when trade agreements aimed at “liberating” inter-country trade are signed. Under TTIP, women’s access to essential services such as healthcare and education and their access to workplace rights could be severely limited. Pay, pensions and other terms and conditions may also be affected in the “race to the bottom”.

In addition to the further privatisation of services, which history has shown to penalise women workers in particular, services such as environmental health and food safety regulation may also be adversely impacted as existing standards are challenged and reduced.

Conference calls upon the service group executive to work with the NEC and all other appropriate bodies to:-

- 1) Raise awareness of the threat TTIP poses to public services and the public interest;
- 2) Campaign for the rejection of TTIP;
- 3) Produce campaign materials which clarify and simplify the issues, explain the dangers and why UNISON is opposed to the agreement as it stands;
- 4) Lobby MP's, MEP's and Ministers to highlight the threats posed by this deal and to oppose its implementation.

22. Towards a £10 per hour Living Wage

Carried as Amended: 22.1

This conference notes and applauds the major campaign being waged by the BFAWU (Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union) within the national fast food takeaway companies, in partnership with the Fast Food Rights Campaign and Youth Fight For Jobs. The main thrust of this campaign is to recruit and organise young people into trade unions around the demand for a £10 per hour Living Wage.

This conference also notes that the GMB National Conference 2014 agreed to campaign for a £10 ph Living Wage in the security industry.

UNISON members in Local Government (those covered by the NJC) were engaged in a major dispute over poverty pay levels in 2014 and the demand for a £1 per hour increase in wages. Conference recognises that, even if this claim had been met in full, thousands of local government workers would still only just be receiving the current UK Living Wage rate of £7.85 per hour.

Our sisters and brothers in the Health Service Group are also campaigning to raise members' pay to a fair level and to eradicate poverty pay.

We can look across the ocean to the USA for inspiration. The 15Now mass movement in Seattle has won legislation which provides for a minimum wage of \$15 per hour. All across America 15Now groups are being established and are growing steadily. Conference applauds this initiative.

This conference believes that we need to raise the sights of members as to what is possible and look towards a Living Wage for all which prevents workers falling into poverty.

Conference therefore agrees to:-

- 1) Support and encourage initiatives in the Local Government Service Group to campaign for a £10 per hour Living Wage;
- 2) Send solidarity greetings to the BFAWU in support of their campaign 'Fast Food Rights';
- 3) Send solidarity greetings to the 15Now campaign in Seattle.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to work within UNISON to promote the idea of a living wage of £10 per hour

24. Low pay and women

Carried as Amended: 24.1

Conference notes that the erosion of pay in local government has had a particularly detrimental effect on women workers.

- 1) Women now make up the vast majority of staff in local government, but are disproportionately represented in the lower grades, this is particularly an issue for Black women;
- 2) The majority of staff on zero hours contracts are women, with many of those women receiving below the minimum wage, as highlighted in the Ethical Care campaign;
- 3) Childcare costs have escalated in recent years, with the Childcare Trust estimating that the average cost of childcare in the UK for a family with one school age and one pre-school child is £11,700 – more than many of our members earn;
- 4) Reorganisation and privatisation of services forces women into lower paid jobs, simply to remain in employment;
- 5) Increasingly local agreements are taking precedence over national agreements, with a detrimental impact on many hard won rights.

Conference calls upon the service group executive to:-

- a) work with all relevant bodies to raise awareness of the harm which this government's policies and employers' actions are having on women workers in local government;
- b) continue to campaign against cuts and for decent and equal pay in local government;
- c) issue guidance to branches on defending local agreements.

25. Living Wage

Carried

Conference is incensed by the effect of continuing austerity on our members and calls on the Service Group Executive to campaign with regions and branches, across all sector bargaining groups, for the Living Wage to be the minimum spinal column point on their respective pay scales.

26. Local Government Finance

Carried

The Wales Local Government Committee is acutely aware of the increasing pressures placed upon the services that our members provide and that they are living with the dire consequences of the financial stranglehold that the current Con/Dem Government are imposing upon the annual budget settlements .We

acknowledge that such draconian funding reductions have been decimating equivalent services in England for a number of years, with non statutory services disappearing and statutory services being externalised to unscrupulous private contractors. This situation is completely unacceptable and unsustainable to our members and the beneficiaries of these services, as we see the function of Local Government being consigned to the dustbin of the public sector.

We need to continue to pressurise the Westminster Government to halt their idealistically driven attack upon local government settlements, we also need to start to explore alternative options which could help to alleviate these acute financial pressures.

The Wales Local Government Committee therefore calls upon Conference to instruct the Service Group Executive to engage with partners such as the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and the New Economic Foundation to establish ways in which Local Government can utilise untapped resources, such as exploring any potential way in which a levy could be introduced to those landlords who rent their properties to students.

Student houses represent a significant part of the privately rented sector within our towns and cities; they are often subject to considerable rental charges and often charge a retainer fee if the accommodation remains unoccupied during holiday periods. Yet these landlords are not obliged to make any financial contribution to the local Council. If a local levy could be introduced it could then be ploughed back into local authorities in order to help redress the acute financial deficit within Local Government.

In conjunction with any exploration of such alternatives we would also urge Conference to agree for the Service Group Executive to continue to lobby the Treasury to agree 3 year financial settlements for Local Government which would aid a more strategic approach to local authorities' medium term financial plans, rather than the current arrangement which inevitably entails Councils financially 'fire fighting' on an annual basis.

31. When is a Co-op not a Co-op

Carried as Amended: 31.1, 31.2

Conference Notes:-

- 1) The continued promotion of co-ops, mutuals and social enterprises by the Coalition Government as being a preferred delivery of local council services. By giving public sector workers a right to form mutuals, co-operatives and other arm's length companies, the government claims to be giving power to local communities and offering a greater role in public services for voluntary and community organisations and other civil society organisations;
- 2) The coalition government hope that by starving councils of funds they can force them to outsource to what they dress up as "worker co-ops" or "employee owned enterprises" with short contracts so that the private sector gets the chance to take them over in the future. Francis Maude - in a leaked

conversation with the CBI shortly after the last election - warned them that the “political risk” of outright privatisation would be “unpalatable” to the public but that “joint ventures between a new mutualised public sector organisation and a 'for profit' organisation would be very attractive”;

- 3) Their real aim is to shrink the state and marketise all public service provision. The government is not interested in whether public service mutuals will exist in five years time, just so long as they form a useful vehicle for the break-up of the public sector today;
- 4) However many Labour controlled councils, facing huge cuts to their budgets are also adopting different approaches to the promotion of co-operatives, from a broadly defined concept of co-operation between employees, council leaders and service users in the design and delivery of services to authorities actively promoting the spin out of all sorts of arm's length companies to councils like Birmingham that openly prefer the commissioning of services;
- 5) If the government was serious about the perceived advantages of mutuals, it would be looking to extend them to the private sector as well as the public sector but of course this is not the case;
- 6) In many cases, mutualisation can be seen as “soft outsourcing”, offered to our members as an alternative to wholesale job cuts and sold as “the best-worst option”. This needs to be resisted as members transferred into new models of delivery face the very real prospect of reductions to existing terms and conditions, as these mutuals face the same diminishing funding climate as the “parent councils” from which they emerged

Conference believes:

- a) The public sector has been hugely successful in providing universal access to essential public services for the entire population, regardless of income. The creation of the welfare state ended the arbitrary and inadequate patchwork of provision that existed when charities, cooperatives, the private sector and municipalities shared the task. The public sector brought equity and justice as well as universality. Which meant that services were accountable to elected representatives and integrated within a national system not just left to the vagaries of the market;
- b) We don't need “staff ownership” schemes as we already own it, that's what being public means. We have public ownership;
- c) Oxfam have produced a report that shows that the richest 1% have more wealth than the bottom 50 % that means that there is a huge amount of wealth being produced by the workers of Britain but only a tiny number of people are benefitting from that wealth. We can afford council services and should be investing in our parks, libraries, health, leisure centre, nurseries, care for the elderly our schools and all of the services that benefit our communities enormously;

- d) That all the major parties are out of step with public opinion that is clearly and strongly against the privatisation of the public sector;
- e) In the sixth richest economy in the world we can afford world class public services.

This conference calls on the SGE to:-

- i) Continue to support branches to campaign for the retention of services to be delivered in-house;
- ii) Continue to publicise the impact of mutualisation on members terms and conditions and the services they deliver, across all Local Government branches;
- iii) Continue to publish guidance, and to offer support to branches facing the imposition of mutualisation by their employers;
- iv) Ask the Labour Link officers to produce information for Labour authorities on the problems of spin offs;
- v) Campaign to get Labour to oppose the Coalition privatisation plans;
- vi) Maintain and support the UNISON branch network of co-operative council branches to share information and best practice

32. Local Government Supporting Joint Working in Education

Carried

College members are increasingly connected to fellow education workers in schools, academies, university technical colleges and other provision nearly all of which are in local government branches; many careers professionals are based in schools and colleges. Colleges are sponsoring academies and developing shared services that cut across traditional institutional boundaries. The National Further Education and 6th Form Colleges committee believes that closer working between members is vital to improving recruitment, organisation and representation of education members, who have many common interests.

Education convenors in some local government branches already facilitate meetings of stewards from different education sectors, but this is not a universal practice. The service group at regional level takes into account the interests of education members in various ways but there is no model of practice and opportunities to collectivise are patchy. There are national committees for schools, colleges and careers, but only occasional joint activity.

The Service Group Executive is asked to review how the service group functions at all levels in the interest of members working in education services. Specifically, it is called upon to:-

- 1) Survey regions on the action taken to facilitate connection between education members;
- 2) Survey local government branches to identify the activity of education convenors and examples of good practice;
- 3) Produce a report on the findings from the above;
- 4) Develop an action plan in response to the findings;
- 5) Present to Local Government Service Group Conference 2016.

33. The Impact of the Adult Education Funding Crisis

Carried

Unlike the school budget, college funding is not ring-fenced and has suffered swingeing cuts in the last five years across the UK countries. The adult skills budget in England has been hit the hardest and faced a £460 million in 2014/5, leading to job cuts and to a dramatic reduction in courses and opportunities for career development and re-training. There is a cut of £271 million for 2015/16, constituting a 19 per cent cut over the two years. Inevitably, fewer courses are available for unemployed people to re-train or enhance their employability. Decisions on how to implement cuts have to be taken at provider level and in isolation. Although FE loans for apprenticeships have been scrapped through lack of take-up, they are being extended to other learners and will act as a deterrent.

In Scotland, commitment was expressed for adult and community learning in a 2014 report, but against the back-drop of reduced local authority spending and cuts to the college sector of £60 million since 2010. Community-based provision is often considered peripheral to the main focus of colleges' work and is vulnerable in this context. Jobs are at risk in Northern Ireland's regional colleges due to 'unprecedented' Department for Education and Learning budget cuts in 2015/16. The six regional FE colleges are facing 10-15 per cent cuts, threatening staff redundancies and a reduction in services. In Wales, the budget for adult learning was slashed for the second year in 2014 and then a further £26 million cut was announced in a supplementary representing more than 5 per cent of the total budget. The cuts were applied primarily to adult and community learning courses, which were significantly hit in the previous year when £65m of FE cuts were announced. These cuts impact on members of the service group across UNISON who work in adult education services and those who rely on them. Campaigns have been prosecuted to defend the service and are on-going, for example, in Merton Adult Education College where the council has been pursuing a commissioning solution, met with an angry response by staff, students and the community; backed by UNISON.

The Service Group Executive is called upon to develop a strategy at all levels to combat the cuts to adult education services, offsetting the damaging consequences to UNISON members and communities; to include:-

- 1) Supporting reps in local college campaigns;
- 2) Working with other unions, students and relevant groups;
- 3) Seeking legal challenge where appropriate;
- 4) Generating a political lobby to restore funding to adult education, to include employers and councils.

The strategy should include measures to take the opportunity of fighting cuts to recruit and organise members in colleges and adult and community education.

34. Retention of Green Book Terms and Conditions

Carried

Conference reaffirms its view that sector-wide collective bargaining – not Regional or local – is best placed to deliver decent pay and conditions, and equality.

It is also the best way to ensure that local government employment reflects our vision for universal and equal public services and deals with the issues arising out of cuts, restructuring, development of combined authorities and City regions, as well as the devolution agenda, which is gathering pace within local government. Sector wide bargaining is also the best way to ensure solidarity and collective action within UNISON and with other unions in local government.

Conference notes:-

- 1) Councils are reorganising services and trying to do more for less. In many cases, they fail to revise job descriptions or to re-evaluate jobs. Members are therefore at risk of being underpaid for extra and more complex work;
- 2) Local government workers fare worse than other public sector groups, in terms of pay, conditions and training. However, they are increasingly required to co-operate with other groups on more favourable pay and conditions through shared services, integrated working and marketisation.

Conference deplores the Local Government Association (LGA)'s continuing policy to negotiate over pay only and devolve negotiations over conditions to council level, undermining the effect of a sector-wide collective agreement. The LGA also continues actively to encourage local attacks on pay and conditions and chip away at job evaluation. A recent example is the LGA/Public Service People Manager's Association (PPMA)/Mercer toolkit on job design and performance, which advocates simplified job design and linking pay to performance.

The National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation (JE) Technical Working Group has ensured the oversight and development of the NJC JE scheme and associated guidance and job profiles. This needs to be recognised as a necessary and ongoing part of the NJC bargaining machinery.

Our work to secure new and more effective bargaining machinery must run alongside increased activity to significantly increase our membership and density and organise for workplace strength. It must also reflect the trends identified in current and future service delivery and local government re-organisation.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:-

- a) Work closely with branches and Regions to develop local campaigns to retain and enhance Green Book conditions;
- b) Ensure a recruitment and organising dimension to the proposed work;
- c) Produce UNISON and joint NJC guidance for councils on effective collective bargaining and the benefits of sector-wide bargaining;
- d) Continue to develop training for activists and paid officials and technical advice to promote equal pay and equality proofed pay structures and equip local and Regional negotiators to spot and counter discrimination and inequality arising from local government cuts and restructuring;
- e) Continue to campaign for equality in pay and conditions across the public sector and for the Living Wage to be the minimum pay point in local government.

35. A Lobbying and Campaign Strategy for Local Government Pay

Carried as Amended: 35.1

Conference notes that local government pay and conditions remain the lowest in the public sector and that the effect of funding cuts on the Local Government workforce is largely overlooked by elected members and politicians. However, a reduced role for local authorities leads to greatly diminished local democracy.

Conference also notes that:-

- 1) The 2015/16 Local Government Finance Settlement reduces central government support by over £3bn in England and over £150m in Wales;
- 2) The Autumn Statement forecasts reduce the revenue available for all government departments by £30 billion by 2019/20 which suggests further cuts to local authority grants;
- 3) The LGA Funding Outlooks do not include any assumptions that address the real terms fall in local government pay in their estimates of the financial gap facing councils up to 2020;
- 4) The UNISON NJC Committee has agreed a strategy to implement conference motions on pay to date.

Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:-

- a) Work with regions and branches to develop an effective recruitment and organising strategy aimed at building membership density to develop stronger sector wide collective bargaining;
- b) Encourage regions and branches to update RMS data;
- c) Develop a high profile media and publicity strategy to publicise the justice of a fair pay deal in local government and that everyone uses local services;
- d) Develop a hard-hitting political strategy of re-engagement with council leaders, mayors and councillors regardless of the political make-up of councils to press our case for a new deal for local government workers;
- e) Establish a campaigning strategy and mechanism for publicising the role of councillors and the importance of lobbying elected members to UNISON members;
- f) Encourage members to lobby their councillors on pay and funding and to hold them to their election promises;
- g) Establish a regular newsletter for councillors to keep them up to date on issues concerning the local government workforce and to promote the benefits gained from strong collective bargaining machinery and build support for a 'new deal' for NJC workers;
- h) Encourage Regions and branches to have regular contact with elected members on the Employers' Side;
- i) Build relationships with councillors through Regional/Provincial NJC councils;
- j) Implement the decisions made at the UNISON Special Local Government Service Group Conference held on 24 March 2015 and back up lobbying with a strategic programme of escalating strike action, organised in accordance with UNISON's rules and procedures;
- k) Lobby and talk with Local Government and other relevant Ministers and Shadow Ministers;
- l) Work with UNISON's Labour Link to promote the NJC committee's strategy on pay at all levels within the Labour Party;
- m) Hold discussions with LGA/NILGAWLGA Group Leaders and sympathetic groups.

35.2

Withdrawn

36. Recruitment and Retention of Activists

Carried as Amended: 36.1

Conference condemns the large number of job losses in Local Government which are a result of the Tory led coalition cuts. Conference acknowledges the particular impact this has had on Local Government branches, the loss of members and often the loss of experienced activists. Conference is angry but recognises that these losses will continue for the foreseeable future.

Therefore, Conference fully understands the importance of recruiting new activists and ensuring the activists we have receive the support, training, and encouragement they need to enable them to fight against ongoing cuts to local government services, campaign for better pay, challenge inequality and represent members.

Conference knows that Branch Educational Co-ordinators have a key part to play in the recruitment and retention of Local Government activists, ensuring the development of activists who are confident and able to stand up for public services and those who provide them.

Conference notes that UNISON's self-organised groups (SOGs) also have a vital role to play in the recruitment, development and retention of activists. SOGs support and encourage members from equality groups to take an active part in their trade union and in our mainstream lay structures at every level, creating a fertile training ground for new and future activists, as well as helping retain our more experienced activists.

Many branch and regional SOGs, such as the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) SOG, hold regular meetings and training for the members they represent, encouraging continued participation. Local community events, which attract people from wider society, are also an ideal opportunity to forge links with members and activists, within local government and in outsourced local government services. Many branch and regional SOGs attend such events throughout the year, helping to encourage and retain activists and as recruit new members. Conference recognises the opportunities these events present and believes branches and regions should actively support them.

Conference calls upon the SGE to:-

- 1) Continue to promote the arguments for facility time for representatives which benefits employers as well as our members;
- 2) Encourage Regional Local Government Committees' to enter into dialogue with employers at a regional level about the importance of activist training;
- 3) Liaise with UNISON Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) to build a campaign which promotes the need for a Branch Education Co-ordinator in every Local Government branch;

- 4) Liaise with the national SOG committees to promote, encourage and strengthen branch support for self-organisation;
- 5) encourage branch and regional support at community equality events, with branch activists and officers assisting SOG reps on UNISON stalls as a visible presence from the local branches.

38. Equality rights and national collective agreements

Carried

Conference is concerned at the continuing pressure to move away from nationally agreed terms and conditions amongst local government employers, including those of our own National Joint Council (NJC).

Conference notes that it was our union's national collective bargaining that established many equality protections long before they were enshrined in law. For example, our predecessor unions secured recognition of same sex partners for the purposes of workplace benefits in the Blue Book over ten years before workplace discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation was banned and twenty years before the first same sex marriages.

However, conference notes the increasing numbers of local government workers who are outside national bargaining and, in some cases, outside any collective agreement, on individualised contracts.

Conference acknowledges the challenges of collective bargaining for local government members in the outsourced sector, which has numerous small employers. Further, many private sector employers mistakenly believing they do not need to deliver on the Equality Act 2010, nor put in place strategies to promote equality.

Conference also acknowledges the challenges of building union density and organisational strength in these types of local government workplaces, to support collective bargaining.

Conference believes that our union's proud track record on equality and self-organisation is a great resource in meeting this challenge. For example, participation in UNISON's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) group unites scattered and isolated members around a shared identity and purpose. Many local government activists have begun their union activism within self-organisation or young members organisation.

Conference therefore calls on the local government service group executive, in liaison with the national self-organised groups and national young members forum, to:-

- 1) Challenge attacks on national local government bargaining agreements and on collective bargaining in general;

- 2) Raise awareness of the value of collective bargaining in relation to equality rights;
- 3) Publicise and promote best practice in entrenching collective bargaining in community, voluntary and private workplaces that fall within the local government service group;
- 4) Increase efforts to build local government workplace density and organisation to support bargaining, including via supporting and promoting our self-organised groups and young members organisation.

39. Local government pay - an equality issue

Carried

Conference notes with concern that local government pay remains the lowest in the public sector, and that most local government workers are also paid substantially less than their equivalents in the private sector. The real value of average UK pay packets has fallen by 12% since 2010, and for most local government workers the fall has been even greater. The pay of half a million members on National Joint Council (NJC) conditions is below the Living Wage. Many members are now forced to rely on in-work benefits, pay day loans and food banks. The myth of the well-rewarded and secure public sector worker and the reality of local government pay are worlds apart.

Conference notes that three quarters of the local government workforce are women, and that Black workers, disabled workers and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers are all more likely to work in local government than in the private sector. Low paying sectors such as social care have a high proportion of migrant workers and workers from across the equalities groups, including LGBT workers. Conference reaffirms that local government pay is an equality issue.

Conference further notes that a number of local government employers have moved, or are trying to move, away from national collective bargaining. A move towards regional or local bargaining will deepen inequality and further erode pay and conditions.

Conference recognises that winning a fair deal for the local government workforce will require a strategy to build our bargaining and industrial strength that engages our members and our activists and has recruitment and organising at its heart.

Conference calls on the local government service group executive to:

- 1) Work with the self-organised groups to highlight the impact of worsening local government pay on different equality groups and the justice of a fair deal, as part of a campaign to recruit more members and activists from these groups and build their support for our strategy;
- 2) Work with the self-organised groups to develop and promote the argument that achieving UNISON's equality aims depends on ending low pay;

- 3) Encourage regions and branches to work with the self-organised groups in developing their recruitment and organising campaigns;
- 4) Work with organisations such as Citizens UK and its regional arms to campaign for a Living Wage for our members, providing guidance and campaign materials to support branches in Living Wage campaigns, including advice on how to reach all potential members;
- 5) Request UNISON Labour Link to promote our campaign for fair pay for local government workers to and within the Labour Party.

41. Improving working conditions for Care workers

Carried

There is a high proportion of Black workers in the care and support sector. Black workers disproportionately face job losses, downgrading and cuts in hours.

In addition to this, care workers working with individuals with learning difficulties and dementia are at a higher risk of suffering from violence and abuse at work. Some of whom find it very difficult to report incidents for fear of losing their jobs or lack of awareness of an organisations policies.

Black staff are continually given the impression that suffering abuse is simply part of the job and in a survey by Skills for Care on support workers in 2013 it found that under reporting was a major issue.

In 2013 UNISON's survey of healthcare assistants found that 85% of the participants were verbally abused whilst 20% had been exposed to actual physical violence at work. Many of those interviewed were thinking of leaving the profession as they felt that their jobs were neither appreciated nor respected by those in authority.

Further UNISON research undertaken in 2012 into homecare revealed over half the respondents reported that their terms and conditions of employment had worsened during that period. In light of these findings UNISON's ethical care charter was developed to establish a minimum baseline for safety, quality and dignity of care.

We therefore call on the Local Government Service Group Executive to work with the National Black Members' Committee to seek to:-

- 1) Explore and discuss how we can encourage Black members to routinely report incidents of abuse;
- 2) Explore increasing training for members on the issue of violence at work and how to combat this;
- 3) Develop a campaign highlighting violence at work and how to combat this issue;
- 4) Promote UNISON's ethical care charter throughout Black members structures and support campaigns for it to be adopted by employers.

Emergency Motion 01 - The Implications of the Outcome of the 2015 GENERAL Election for UNISON in Local Government

Lost

Emergency Motion 03 - NJC Pay

Withdrawn

Motions not reached

2. Pay 2015/16 Getting the message across

This Conference applauds the actions of UNISON members and their willingness to take action in support of decent pay, which in Scotland forced the employer back to the negotiating table for the 2015/16 pay negotiations and secured a commitment across Scotland to a living wage for all council staff consolidated into the pay structures.

Despite this limited success most of our members still only received a 1% pay rise last year and are still faced with the reality that the value of local government pay has fallen at least 13% since 2010. Workers in Scotland are on average £1,753 worse off, with the gender pay gap widening. This is the longest real wage pay squeeze since 1870. For the first time, we have more in-work poverty than out-of-work poverty.

Meanwhile top earners continue to amass obscene wealth, profiting from austerity. In the last four years the wealth of Britain's 1,000 richest people has soared by a staggering £190bn to £449bn. The country is not broke, it is just the money is in the wrong hands.

There is a growing realisation that this is not about what the country can afford, it is about an ideology of planned poverty and a low wage, low skill economy. We must continue to organise to get that message out to members.

This Conference recognises that action on pay will not be delivered unless we fully consult and engage with members on why a decent pay rise is affordable, why it would boost local economies and why we are 'Worth it' in the words of the UNISON campaign.

This Conference calls on the Service Group Executive to:-

- 1) Ensure the infrastructure is in place to support stewards to set up workplace meetings throughout the first part of this year, to consult and campaign with members;

- 2) Provide information and publicity for organising staff, stewards and Branch Officers to take forward the arguments with members and to recruit non-members;
- 3) Continue to co-ordinate a UK campaign to challenge this Government's rhetoric and dogma and to make the arguments why increasing the pay of public service workers is not just good for our members but also for the wider economy.

23. Co-ordinated campaign against job cuts in Local Government

This Conference condemns the huge number of job losses in Local Government since 2010, totalling over half a million jobs. Vital Local Government services are being radically reduced, with the closures of adult residential and day care provision, libraries and leisure facilities and many other services. The likelihood of further huge job losses after the May General Election is very high.

Virtually all UNISON branches in Local Government face the same or similar problems of jobs and services being constantly eroded. Individual branches make heroic attempts locally to fight off these attacks and often feel totally overwhelmed given the lack of a co-ordinated national fight back.

The power of our union acting collectively has never been so important. Despite all the possible legal obstacles of a co-ordinated campaign of action, this Conference believes that is what is necessary if the slaughter of jobs and services is to be halted.

Conference therefore calls on the Local Government Service Group Executive to urgently investigate legal ways of co-ordinating and organising disputes across Local Government branches with the aim of building an effective campaign with a strong national focus. Moreover, such a campaign should aim to strengthen our links and work with other trade unions in order to build a collective voice that will stop the further erosion of council jobs and services.

23.1

In the final paragraph, after "strong national focus". Add new sentence:

This should include, working with regions and branches facing cuts to coordinate a month of national action to stop the cuts as part of Council's budget rounds, including a demonstration / lobby outside parliament against council cuts, with other public sector unions; and help to coordinate strike action and protests called by local branches across Local Government to take place on the same day / week. And to investigate how to best use UNISONs media channels, magazine, website, social media and press contacts to give this the highest possible profile".

27. Administration of Medicines and Medical Support in Educational Establishments.

Conference notes that discussions continue with the Scottish Government on the responsibility for the administration of medicines and medical procedures in educational establishments and that revised guidance on this is due to be completed early in 2015. We also note that the UK Government has issued statutory guidance called Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions.

UNISON is concerned that the revised guidance in Scotland appears to continue to rely on employees volunteering to carry out the administration of medication and/or medical procedures when these tasks are not identified within their roles and responsibilities.

The Scottish Government's Additional Support for Learning Bill gives parents additional rights to request that their children access mainstream education (social inclusion) and while UNISON supports this we are concerned that the additional resources required to support children with additional needs including medical needs are not forthcoming.

UNISON believes that staff whose contract does not specify administering medication or medical procedures cannot be required to do them and should not be bullied into carrying them out.

UNISON members should be given the choice of whether or not to take on these specialist duties. If they choose to do these duties, which carry an additional level of responsibility, require specific regular training and need them to be indemnified by their employer, then this should be reflected in a higher grade for the additional tasks identified.

We therefore call on the SGE to:-

- 1) Continue to raise this issue with the UK Government and devolved administrations to ensure that enforceable national standards are established, accompanied by comprehensive guidance covering workforce concerns and training needs;
- 2) Raise the issue with the relevant employer bodies to establish a set of principles on the administration of medicines and medical support;
- 3) Assist regions/branches to negotiate policies or review existing policies on the administration of medicines and medical support which will include accredited training and robust procedures relevant to the various medical conditions.
- 4) Encourage regions/branches to resist the imposing of these specialist duties under the guise of volunteering and to negotiate with the employer new posts, from within their existing workforce, which include a range of specialist duties with the appropriate higher grade for undertaking these.

28. Campaign to defend council services, jobs and working conditions

Conference notes that since 2009 there has been a 25% real terms cut in Scottish local government spending. Nearly 40,000 council jobs in Scotland have been lost since the start of the ConDem vicious austerity programme and at least £2billion stolen from councils across Scotland. UNISON members who work for community and voluntary organisations have also faced a massive assault on their jobs, conditions and the services they provide. The impact has been even greater when the increased demands due to the social fallout of the capitalist economic crisis are factored in.

Conference further notes that that the situation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is similar with variations only in the scale of the cuts from one council to another. These cuts represent an onslaught against the services our members in local government deliver, their terms and conditions, pay and jobs.

Conference congratulates UNISON members and branches who have acted to resist cuts in pay and attacks on terms and conditions through negotiation, campaigning and industrial action. The good work of many UNISON branches in developing and assisting local community campaigning against cuts in services, care centre closures, school closures, library closures, increases in charging for council services, etc is also acknowledged. However, we need to step – up our resistance as the attacks continue in 2015/16 and beyond. Conference therefore agrees the following:-

- 1) That the Service Group Executive, in conjunction with the relevant Local Government Committees in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, campaign around a policy of No Cuts and an end to the Council Tax freeze as our primary political demands. We immediately call on all councils to use all their financial mechanisms and powers to hold off any further cuts and set budgets to maintain existing services, while building a campaign to win increased funding for local government in all parts of the UK. Elected councillors need to stand up for their communities and set budgets which protect our public services;
- 2) That the Service Group Executive and the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Local Government Committees support branches who take action appropriate to their local circumstances, including vigorous political campaigning to defend services and the consideration of industrial action, and assist with the co-ordination of these, including, where branches decide to take industrial action in line with UNISON Industrial Action procedures, co-ordinating industrial action where possible;
- 3) That the Service Group Executive support the calling of national and regional conferences of local government trade union organisations to discuss what action can be taken to assist in building a co-ordinated fight back against cuts to services, conditions and jobs. Such conferences could also involve campaigns such as campaigns to defend local services, trades councils and similar anti-cuts organisations.

Conference recognises that the cuts in Council budgets are expected to continue in future years and that without a strong campaign of resistance built by UNISON, other trade unions and community groups and service users the future of local government itself is at risk. Therefore conference urges all branches to support the Service Group Executive in building such a campaign.

29. Local Government Cuts and Disabled People

Conference over the last five years Local Government endured unprecedented budget cuts, thousands of jobs losses and increased stress levels as staff are put under pressure to deliver more for less. Thousands of our members have lost their jobs while others have to be made fight to keep them year after year.

These cuts affected all Local Government employees but everything from the scale of the cuts to how they have been implemented locally has had a detrimental impact on our disabled members as employees and as users and providers of services.

Councils have cut jobs by implementing redundancy selection processes. While many put reasonable adjustments in place and disregarded disability related absence some others did not. Some have gone through selection processes every year for five years and the constant worry has had a devastating impact on the physical and mental health of disabled members that didn't stop when selection was complete.

Disabled Members who kept their jobs have been subjected to changes at work such as hot desks, extended job descriptions, more responsibility and reduced support all of which make difficult situations worse.

Branches are reporting that some Council departments have not had the cuts of 30% that have been reported. Actual levels of job cuts have been as high as 60% to 70% while local authorities are still expecting work output to remain at the same level.

We have seen an increasing number of disabled members taking voluntary redundancy. This has not been through choice but because they see no other option due to the ever increasing workload and constant stress of the prospect of losing their job.

While redundancy payments are the same whether a person is disabled or not decent job prospects are few and far between for disabled people. Where public services have been privatised there is the added disadvantage of employers valuing profit over rights and a fear that declaring a disability will lead to discrimination.

Local Government has suffered the highest possible levels of public sector cuts but from 7 May we have a new government. Whatever the political make up of the government it is time to support disabled members to reclaim their independence and dignity and have their valuable contribution to local government and society recognised once again.

Conference instructs the Local Government Service Group Executive to:-

- 1) Campaign for cumulative impact assessments to be carried out on the impact of five years of local government cuts on disabled employees;
- 2) Raise awareness of the differential impact of local government cuts on disabled employees;
- 3) Lobby government to reverse the planned future cuts to local government funding;
- 4) Work with the national disabled members committee to provide guidance to branches on effective monitoring, and the impact of redundancies and reorganisation on disabled people in local authorities.

30. Local Government outsourcing and disabled members

Conference is concerned about increased outsourcing in Local Government. Even Councils who oppose privatisation are going down the path of supporting mutualisation, social enterprise and cooperative all of which are another name for outsourcing.

Local government services are not meant to make a profit. Many are considered to be essential to life and their universal provision should be guaranteed. Council workers who deliver these services often want to give something back to their community through work.

Private sector organisations, by their very nature, must make a profit to survive. Workers terms and conditions a reduced to maximise profits and disabled employees are often seen as a burden rather than making a valuable contribution to the organisation.

The National Audit Office states “successful Commissioning helps public sector commissioners get better value for money from third sector organisations” but there is little evidence to demonstrate this is what happens in practice.

Outsourcing usually means large private sector businesses delivering local government services for profit. Companies such as Balfour Beatty, Capita and G4S are delivering Local Government Services. Outsourced services include respite care for disabled children and adults; play schemes for looked after children and internal HR services. Delivery of these services should not be about maximising profit or cutting costs but based on quality and individual need.

Little consideration is given to the impact on the workers who deliver these services or what a change of employer or redundancy will mean for them. Even after years of cuts, most Councils still treat disabled staff with dignity and respect and that is why there are a higher proportion of disabled people working in the public sector than in other professions.

Evidence suggests that when Local Government services are outsourced work patterns change and terms and conditions are diminished leading to high levels of stress that impact on both physical and mental ill health. Increased workload, reduced flexibility and longer working days are being introduced to maximise profit but this is debilitating for many disabled members.

Conference urges the Local Government Service Group Executive to:-

- 1) Put the impact of outsourcing on disabled workers at the centre of campaigns on these issues;
- 2) Work with the National Executive Committee and other relevant Service Group Executives to raise concerns about these issues in regions and branches;
- 3) Develop guidance and raise awareness of the importance of reasonable adjustments for disabled members delivering outsourced or privatised Local Government services.

37. Fragmented Workforce

Conference acknowledges that as a result of the Coalition cuts in Local Government many Local Authorities have outsourced services in an attempt to save money. Conference applauds those Local Government branches who have fought to retain services in house, however, the growing number of members who are no longer directly employed by Local Authorities cannot be ignored.

Conference recognises the very real difficulties many Local Government branches have in representing and organising members who are not employed by the Local Authority.

Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive (SGE) to develop and issue guidance to Local Government branches suggesting strategies branches can adopt to ensure members in Local Government branches, regardless of their employer, can fully participate in the democracy and decision making of the union and access all the benefits of UNISON membership.

40. No Compulsory Redundancies in Local Government

Conference recognises that local government in all parts of the UK have seen budgets cut as part of the Tory/Lib Dem coalition's austerity policies. This has resulted in thousands of jobs being lost, terms and conditions attacked, pay freezes and pay cuts for our members.

Conference notes that the highest losses of jobs in the public sector have been in local government. This loss of employment opportunities is devastating for many communities where the prospect of alternative employment is slight.

In Scotland most of these job losses have been through non filling of vacancies, redeployment and voluntary redundancy. UNISON branches have been able to negotiate no-compulsory redundancy agreements with a number of Scottish Councils but others have not. It is recognised that more Councils will consider making staff compulsorily redundant as the budget cuts continue.

Conference believes that whilst all job losses should be resisted, compulsory redundancies in local government must be fought at all levels and by all means.

Conference therefore calls on the Service Group Executive to lead a campaign in all sectors to resist and fight compulsory redundancies. This should include:-

- 1) Campaign materials against compulsory redundancies;
- 2) Advice to branches and sector committees on negotiating no-compulsory redundancy agreements;
- 3) Asking Labour Link to raise this issue within the Labour Party to seek commitments from all Labour Councillors to oppose compulsory redundancies;
- 4) Supporting branches that seek to organise legal industrial action to resist compulsory redundancies, and;
- 5) Promote the campaign to members through UNISON media emphasising our commitment to support any member, in any council, threatened by compulsory redundancy.

42. Black workers in senior positions

It is an accepted fact that the makeup of a government institution should be reflective of the local demography of the area in which it is located. For many years this has been an aspiration.

UNISON's own freedom of information requests looking at local government employers in several UNISON regions including London, West Midlands, East Midlands, Eastern, Wales and the North West found that even in areas with larger Black populations, within the workforce there was huge under representation.

While some local government employers have made tremendous strides to address this situation there are many places where unfortunately representation in the workforce is skewed. Even where the balance is more representative of the local demographic Black workers still primarily constitute the majority of the lowest tier of employees.

The same research statistics of local authority redundancies showed that Black people have been disproportionately made redundant over the last 3 years. However, for Black workers having lost their jobs already and those at risk in the next wave of inevitable cuts the value of the research is limited.

A principal solution to reduce the risk and/or impact of cuts in local government on Black workers is to ensure that more Black workers are promoted into senior positions and that at senior management level local authorities are representative of the populations that they serve.

Conference instructs the Local Government Service Group Executive to work with the National Black Members Committee to seek to:-

- 1) Identify local government employers where Black members are persistently under represented in senior positions;
- 2) Work with relevant regions to develop action plans to address the issue;
- 3) Promote Challenging Racism in the Workplace resources and training and using equality legislation to address patterns of discrimination in local government workplaces.

EM02 Recorded Voting

This Local Government Conference notes the outcome of the Special Conference and the decision to submit an additional pay claim in respect of 2015/16.

This Conference notes that on 14 April the NJC (National Joint Council) rejected a high profile submission of the additional pay claim.

The meeting considered a proposal to write to the employers asking why they were resistant to lay involvement (it is understood Unite and GMB Lead Officers are also opposed to this), which was defeated by 12 to 11 with 7 abstentions.

This Conference believes in transparency and accountability and demands that in any future NJC meeting decisions relating to pay must be subject to a recorded individual vote on how members of the NJC voted and that it be minuted.

Conference notes that the additional pay claim was submitted on 22 April in a seven line letter and was rejected by the employers in writing less than 10 minutes later.

Conference rejects the inadequate nature of the presentation of our claim and reiterates our agreed policy that there must be lay member involvement in any meeting with the employers related to our pay.

Conference notes that NJC Pay 16 Bulletin 1, dated 22 May 2015, informed Branches that the UNISON NJC Committee “will consider next steps” in relation to our additional 2015/16 pay claim at its meeting on 8 July.

Conference instructs the SGE to ensure that in all deliberations the NJC Committee takes full note of this motion and the clear direction given by the Special Conference.

EM04 New Government – Threat to Local Services

Conference notes with grave concern the election of a majority Conservative government on 7 May and its likely catastrophic impact on local government services and the UNISON members who provide them.

As a result of the Tory majority, we expect spending cuts of £4 in every £100 the first year, followed by £3.50 in every £100 the year after; not the £1 in every £100 each year claimed by David Cameron. As a result of the election, hundreds of thousands more local government jobs could disappear.

These cuts will be laid out more fully in the emergency budget due on 8 July.

The Conservative Government's plans, laid out in the Queen's speech on 27 May, to legislate to make industrial action far more difficult, especially in the public sector, and its manifesto pledge to cut down still further on trade union facility time.

Conference believes that it is vital that the Local Government Service Group, and the whole of UNISON, fights hard against these cuts. This campaign should focus more on the Westminster Government, than local councils, as it is from Westminster that the funding crisis in local government has and will come. Without more funding for local government, it will be impossible to achieve improvement in services nor the pay rises our members need to make up for the massive loss in real pay they have experienced in recent years. In order to deal with the impact of the cuts in facility time, and to bargain collectively and take lawful industrial action on pay, UNISON needs to embark on a massive recruitment and organising drive in local government, to improve our density and workplace organisation.

Conference instructs the Service Group Executive (SGE) to:

- 1) Work with the NEC, other service groups, regions, branches and other relevant parts of the union to continue to defend facility time against attacks from the Conservative Government, promote the value it brings to employment relationships, and seek to ensure branches are equipped to represent and organise members facing facility time cuts;
- 2) Campaign for a positive vision of local services, as a key contributor to society, making clear the likely impact of the new Conservative Government's planned cuts in local government funding;
- 3) Link the Service Group's pay campaigns more closely to our campaign against the cuts, making clear that any pay campaign must have a political strategy for fairer funding for local government;
- 4) Ensure that branches and regions are supported with materials, online resources, guidance and training as they campaign against the impact of the policies of the new Government; and co-ordinate action to resist those policies;

- 5) Prioritise these campaigns when allocating Service Group resources and work with other parts of the union to maximise the resources available;
- 6) Continue the SGE's recently agreed recruitment and organising campaign, with a clear focus on engaging members and potential members and activists in the campaign against the new Government's policies, and to encourage the recruitment and training of new stewards;
- 7) Encourage Local Government branches to fully participate in the national People's Assembly Demonstration Against Austerity on 20 June, and within it to highlight the impact on Local Government;
- 8) Encourage branches to support protests on 8th July and highlight the impact on Local Government of accelerated and deeper cuts;
- 9) Seek to co-ordinate current disputes within Local Government, where possible, for joint action on budget day 8th July.