

UNISON
Newcastle City Branch
BRANCH COMMITTEE MINUTES
6TH DECEMBER 2010

PRESENT: L Alderson, L Newton, E Whitby, A Watt, M Haddon, R Nelson, T Murray, A Green, A Gilks, J Horne, K Ameli, H Ottie, L Chapman, S Mulligan, C Pegg, M Harrison, M Temperley, A Hamilton, J Bourn, R Fenton, J Nicholson, B Oliver, C Davison, L Storey, L McGurk, R Sheikh, C Clayton, F Mendelson, W Aitman, V Suddes, A Stephenson, D Gormley, J Kennett, D Muse, N Nicholson, K Bell, P Gilroy, N Ramanandi.

C Hodgson (In attendance)

N Ramanandi in Chair

1. APOLOGIES

B Mokhtare, F Sheiber, C Armstrong, M Brown, R Holland, J Liepins-Hall, L Grainger, A Carson, C Graham, M Hall, C Stevenson, A Stephenson, N Ahmed, S Hicks, C Ash, B Taylor, H Hawthorn, I Parker, J Mains, L Hardy, S Rounthwaite, D Stoker.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Branch Comm. 1 November	Agreed
Health & Safety 11 October	Noted
Branch Education 15 November	Noted

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership increase by 32.

4. STEP- moved to item 3

PG gave a brief overview regarding STEP that some info was beginning to be shared within certain directorates such as E&R and CXO, Adult and Culture and Children's to start too. Share info from 9th December following the council meeting with Executive on the 8th December.

UNISON have pointed out difficulties we will face due to the Christmas break etc.

- Within CXO a review of ICT has been carried out – this included the structure, which will impact on a couple of areas and bring other areas together, clarity needed for the future due to funding for BSF etc.
- In Audit – no potential job losses have been highlighted. A number of job losses had been identified within Customer Services.
- No detail has been released at this time around Insurance.
- Within Finance no job cuts have been identified, existing vacancies and fixed term contracts will manage staffing reductions.
- Revenues and Benefits has identified 34 job cuts which equates to approx 1/6th of the workforce and includes all levels of staff from management to frontline delivery staff, staff will be receiving detail of this on Wed 8 December.
- Within E&R proposals have started today within Leisure, there are a total of 12 reviews including localised services.
- Where there are current STEP reps, they need to be involved in consultation.
- In ABR there has been a large review - received little info to date.

PG - we have an imminent meeting with SLT tomorrow to have a walk through STEP reviews which will then go to Exec on the 8 December.

We have put in place a number of open meetings to discuss STEP and the CSR which are as follows:

Monday 13th December 12.30-1.30pm Council Chamber, and 4.30-5.30pm Springfield Centre, Main Hall. Tuesday 14th December 11.30am-12.30pm Springfield Centre, Main Hall. Wednesday 15th December 4.00-5.00pm Council Chamber

Other areas affected in the first phase of STEP will start to receive proposals later this week.

- Regarding timescales - the authority would prefer to have most proposals in place by 31 March 2011; however this will be difficult for issuing notices etc.

- The authority do not currently have a clear process for managing job losses such as voluntary severance trawls and there is not likely to be any further enhanced packages more than the existing package currently is.

MH - re no voluntary trawls - staff have been told to approach management if they wish to go voluntarily.

KB - government have only allowed £200m for redundancies nationally - most councils will have to use revenue spend. We must ensure that the Lib Dems argue for more funding for redundancies and that we have a regional focus.

1000 jobs are due to go in the current year. It cost the authority over £20m for just over 500 jobs under transformation.

The mass meetings which have been arranged are very important and we need large numbers to show that staff are supporting UNISON. Equally we need workplace reps as these are fundamental.

PG - having lots of reps, not just shop stewards, was very useful during single status.

KB - The authority agreed to a motion in July where they agreed to avoid compulsory redundancies – we must ensure we hold the Leader of the Council to this.

On 12 January a report goes to Executive regarding grant settlement, we feel it is very important to lobby this meeting and would be looking for a mass turnout. We would like people to be there between 4.30pm-6.15pm approx. children are welcome. 50 or 60 people turning up is not enough, we need hundreds if not thousands. Lobby **AGREED**

EW - every year the redundancy package is reviewed, and the council have the ability to reduce the existing package - is this correct?

PG - yes it is, at moment the council offers up to 60 weeks pay, the statutory minimum is 30 weeks. Currently there is no intention to review the package downwards however after March they may.

SM - People are worried, we need communications highlighting what it means to people, for example the impact of not having streets swept or bins emptied.

NR - will put info on branch website (<http://www.unison-newcastle.org.uk/>) about the personal and economic effects.

MH - People looking at things personally and not the impact on the service.

JN - could another meeting be arranged at Partnership House?- PG this option will be looked at.

AH - Regarding the meeting on 12 January - Staff affected in Phase 1 should go but also staff who will be in phase 2. Staff have been asking when will we do something?

JK - lot of traded services are GMB could we co-ordinate with them?

KB - will contact other TU's to support the lobby.

NR - regarding the GMB we will work together where this is useful.

PG - this is also an opportunity to recruit - density not as big as we would like it to be.

NR - appeals are also a recruitment opportunity.

EW - can we have a leaflet for January?

5. THANKS

PG presented Ken McCormick with a thank you from the branch for his many dedicated years of UNISON activeness as he moves onto pastures new.

5. COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW

PG - The council is expecting info on the settlement on 13 Dec.

KB- we need a timetable for CSR

6. SINGLE STATUS

Term time working:

NN - discussions are due to begin on 8 December between TU's, representative heads and the authority. Within the Single Status agreement the authority advised if a national agreement was not reached by SSSNB by April 2011 then the authority would begin local negotiations, due to the government abolishing SSSNB the authority has decided to progress this matter. Meeting will be held in the new year with members who are likely to be affected.
KB - 90% of the workforce are women and this could result in a significant pay-cut especially due to the financial impact.

Special meeting with reps from schools and senior officers to discuss options to also be arranged - hope to have more info to bring to branch committee in January.

MH - Is there a regional plan as opposed to just a branch plan?

KB - other local authorities have already implemented.

JK - would like to be part of meetings.

PG - have asked for reasonable times to meet with staff

Appeals:

PG - have asked for an extension to the 3 month window due to the high volume of appeal requests we have received.

LM - do we fill form in then inform branch?

NR - Yes

LM - how do we proceed?

NR - contact the branch in the first instance.

Implementation issues/work streams:

PG - there has been a lack of progress in all of the work streams which include standby, work/life balance, family friendly policies, health and wellbeing and learning and development.

FM - important need faster development on L&D especially for STEP.

KB - will flag with political leadership if no movement soon.

7. MOTIONS

KB - moved the motion submitted from the branch

EW - moved his amendments to the motion

Discussion:

RS - Regarding meeting at Newcastle University - open meeting inviting unions - looking to build alliances, what's happening to students is nothing dissimilar to cuts in other public services.

AH - not about bringing down the government it's about cuts and rises in tuition fees etc.

JN - don't understand what EW means offering financial resources to students in motion.

NR - encourage people to attend PSA's as very good, doing lots of work.

2 votes in support of amendment – **NOT PASSED**

Unanimous support for un-amended motion – **PASSED**

8. STAFF SURVEY

No info

9. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

WA - B2L - been working mainly in Adults - now going to be moving into Children's Services Social Care with Lyn Alderson on part time release until the end of March.

A meeting is being held with Children's ULR's and Becky Dunn on 10 December.

FM – ECDL - Local Authority agreed to fund over 100 staff in admin.

LH - Admin are having fortnightly meet with managers and discussions are being held regarding the resource management tool which has now been scrapped as was not useful - looking into ECDL instead.

RS - Still recruiting Community Learning Champions.

10. COMMUNITY ORGANISER

PG - Community Organiser has been recruited - Emma Lipscombe has previously been on release in the branch and done work with the TUC which the branch will benefit from. Emma will be joining us from the 4 January 2011 and working across our branch and 2 others in the Northern region.

11. NEC

PG has been elected and is due to attend his first meeting this week, as this was a bi-election will be asking for votes again in the New Year.

12. MEETING REPORTS

LGSG - Held in past week, currently many common issues across Local Govt.

CJC - Single Status and Step main issues of discussion at CJC

Disabled Members - AH - report has been handed out, congratulations to Malcolm Temperley who has been elected to the National Disabled Members Committee and won this position with 100% of votes!

13. DIRECTORATE REPORTS

Adult and Culture: NR advised Mike Symington and Josie Bird are leads, in addition Lynda Hardie will now lead on Culture.

Children's Services: NN gave an update - No STEP info yet. Issue around youth service residential's being stopped, issue was raised at DJC. Funding received to the authority through the social work improvement fund - 10k been spent on a consultant to get info that could have been taken from national survey from UNISON and the staff survey- raised at DJC. STEP reps meetings happening fortnightly. Connexions staff discussion commencing this week to move TUPE'd staff onto Newcastle contract.

CXO: PG - no further info

E&R: NR - Parks and Countryside review still ongoing. Security - still outstanding, 34 staff feel they are on redundancy notice although currently they are not.

Admin: Already covered - not directly involved with STEP but will be indirectly.

14. HEALTH & SAFETY

JR - cold weather has set limits for working conditions/temperatures - if indoors the law is minimum of 16 degrees, it is not appropriate to add outdoor clothing to keep warm, management has 1 hour from being raised as an issue to correct the issue.

15. AFFILIATIONS, DONATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Strike fund - agreed

Women's aid Christmas appeal - £250 agreed

Staff cross country handicap - £250 agreed

Chris Easton - Brick Kiln workers - £150 agreed

Young members - donation to buy medical supplies - £150 agreed

JR - asked for costs to be covered for a training event in London by TUC 'going to work' - in principal agreed - JR to find out costs.

Glastonbury festival volunteers have raised £996 this year - which charity/organisation to donate to? Branch agreed 50/50 to Haiti disaster fund and Oesophagoose, the Oesophageal Cancer Charity at Newcastle Freeman Hospital.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None