

This branch agrees to consider how the branch is best fit to meet the serious challenges ahead; the continued use of the coalition government's austerity agenda to erode the public sector has, and continues to have, a direct effect on Unison members' pay, conditions and morale. Any solution must include involving lay members at all levels in the branch and taking steps to ensure they can be involved; careful consideration needs to be given to how Newcastle City Unison Branch is organised in order to meet these challenges.

This branch notes:

- Local government services and jobs have been cut
- our membership has been reduced
- more members in the branch than ever before will no longer be directly employed by the Council, in particular, consideration needs to be given to the possibility that the council intends to outsource services to a proposed Care Co-operative
- hardship mean many members are doing second jobs and struggle to be active in the union
- childcare costs continue to rise while pay doesn't
- New council structure, new directorates, and new ways of working

This branch believes:

1. We should address the real circumstances of our members, consider how we can support them to organise in the workplace and include them in decision making by considering;

- timings of meetings including AGM,
- supporting costs for carers
- increasing Unison meetings in the workplace
- other ways to be more inclusive

with the aim of increasing involvement in the branch and turnout at meetings and elections.

2. We should address the fact that local government has changed and the way we staff the branch, represent members and negotiate with the employer needs to adapt to these changing circumstances.

3. That we should seek to negotiate with the Council how the Branch can encourage its co-operative value of empowering staff and enable their Unison representatives to facilitate this. In order to do this we should resolve to seek agreement that

- time, both facility time and facilitated time, is granted to allow members, shop stewards and convenors to be active in workplace decision making and problem solving, with the support of officers.
- Workloads of convenors and shop stewards should reflect the work they do on behalf of Unison

This branch agrees to:

1. Instigate a thorough review of the following:

- honoraria- as already proposed by NEC (in line with NEC guidelines with no officer in receipt of honoraria taking part in decision, and in line with Branch rules page 2, 7 and 16)

- expenses and how they are promoted (ensuring they are be made in conformity with the scheme outlined in the National Branch Finances Policy, and agreed at the next AGM in line with rules page 7)
- officer positions and roles (appendix 2 of the branch rules)
- The use of facility time and facilitated time and how it is allocated in the branch; to take into account branch and national rules whilst doing so.
- AGM, general meetings and elections (in line with NEC guidelines on lay member led union and in line with branch rules)
- How we can encourage more Shop Stewards to take on case work.

2. To discuss the timetable and process for this review at a special branch committee (in lines with national and branch rules)

3. To put the outcome of such a review to a Branch meeting within 6 months

4. To put into effect proposed changes (if any) by amendments to the branch rules and standing orders including appendices (in line with branch and national rules)

Proposed: Eddie Wilson

Seconded: Nancy Bone