

Gateshead UNISON News

March 2017

Protecting jobs, protecting terms and conditions – proudly representing over 5000 members in over 130 employers.

Budget Negotiations Update

Cabinet met earlier this week to discuss the savings proposals - the full Council meets today (Thursday 23rd) to formally vote on the proposals.

What have UNISON done in this consultation period?

- We have met with teams and individuals affected by the proposals
- We have held extensive discussions with managers in areas affected by the proposals
- We highlighted to Councillors, key areas where there has been a lack of information which has prevented effective consultation
- We discussed alternative options and models for a number of proposals resulting in changes being made and fewer compulsory redundancies
- We formally responded to each of the 63 budget proposals contained in the budget report
- We attended the Cabinet meeting to raise our concerns with proposals affecting UNISON members - especially in areas where redundancies are likely and the proposals will result in a reliance on the Voluntary Sector to provide Council services

What are UNISON doing now?

- We will continue to focus on the areas where there are potential compulsory redundancies in order to reduce this number where possible and to support our members
- We will support constructive approaches and alternative ways of working which will deliver savings and generate income - whilst protecting jobs and services
- We will continue to champion high quality, in-house services
- We will continue to recognise the severe budget situation and the fundamental impact these proposed cuts will have on the services which residents of Gateshead rely on and will continue to work closely with the Council
- We will continue to campaign to highlight the unfair reductions in Gateshead Council's budget allocation from the central Government

NHS - Sustainability and Transformation Plans OR Slash and Trash Plans?

Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) are being drawn up by local NHS leaders to identify money that will help to fill financial shortfalls. The plan for our area reveals that by 2021, the health and social care system is projected to be £960m short of the funds it needs to balance the books while maintaining the same level of care. Northumberland, Tyne and Wear STP covers 1.5million residents across Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Northumberland and Sunderland.

On Saturday 4 March 2017 a rally and march has been organised in London to tell Government they are destroying the NHS and we will not let it happen. If you are interested in attending the march and need help getting there, please contact the UNISON branch office: 0191 4776638



KNOW YOUR

UNISON BRANCH

CONVENORS AND CONTACTS

Care, Wellbeing and Learning

Adult Social Care and Independent Living/ Health and Social Care, Comm. and QA

Dave Watson Tel 4776638

Email davewatson@gatesheadunison.co.uk

Karen McArthur Tel: 4776638

email karenmcarthur@gatesheadunison.co.uk

Social Work - Children and Families/Children and Families Support/Learning and Schools/ Education Gateshead

Kim Convery Tel 4776638

Email: kimconvery@gatesheadunison.co.uk

Corporate Services and Governance

Dave Smith Tel: 4776638

email davesmith@gatesheadunison.co.uk

Communities and Environment

Development and Public Protection

Clive Gowlett Tel: 4333424

email clivegowlett@gateshead.gov.uk

Communities and Environment

Waste Services, Grounds Maintenance and Fleet/Facilities Management/Construction Services

Dave Watson Tel 4776638

Email davewatson@gatesheadunison.co.uk

The Gateshead Housing Company,

Deborah Ewart Tel 433 6164

deborahewart@GatesheadHousing.co.uk

Branch Support Team

Ali Toward Tel 477 6638

info@gatesheadunison.co.uk

Chris Sharkey

chrissharkey@gatesheadunison.co.uk

www.gatesheadunison.co.uk



Surrey Council's £44m 'Social Care sweetheart deal'?

All local authorities in England should be allowed to keep a greater share than they do currently of business rates so they can afford to fund social care properly. UNISON is urging the government to grant Councils better terms like they have in a deal agreed earlier this month with Surrey County Council which is allegedly worth £44m.

Councils are currently only allowed to keep half the rates they get from local businesses. But Surrey has been told it can hold on to more of the cash it raises but only if it abandons plans to hold a referendum on increasing council tax by 15 per cent.

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis said: "Social care is in crisis with dedicated staff struggling to cope with ever-increasing demand. "The government has recognised Surrey County Council needs more cash by allowing it to keep more of its business rates. But one council shouldn't be allowed a better deal just because it threatened a politically embarrassing referendum.

"All councils providing social care need to be treated equally. An agreement should be drawn up now allowing them to keep more of their business rates too. This is the only way that those in desperate need of support will get the care they deserve."

Attacks on Terms and Conditions

Gateshead Council's scrutiny of staff Terms & Conditions and Protection Agreements continues. This focus is unjustifiable when UNISON members continue to deliver services with 100% commitment whilst personal finances are under increasing pressure.

We vigorously challenge any further cuts. Why?

- Local Government workers pay has shrunk by over **16%** since 2011 and will continue to do so.
- Removing or reducing allowances i.e. enhancements, shift allowance etc. could potentially cut the take home pay of our lowest paid members by a staggering **20 - 25%**.
- The Bank of England expect inflation to hit **2.5-3%** next year.
- Staff car parking is expected to rise by between **6 - 8.3%** - on top of further reductions in Essential Car User Status.
- The 4 year salary protection agreement for staff redeployed on a lower grade (as an alternative to redundancy) has allowed the council to undertake dramatic changes - whilst still delivering high levels of services

Huge cuts to take home pay is unacceptable. If any proposals emerge, we will launch consultative ballots with UNISON members with a clear option of industrial action.