

Standing up for JOBS and SERVICES at Southampton City Council



City-wide action by Unite and Unison begins Monday, May 23rd 2011



STOP CONSERVATIVE CUTS!

Why we are taking action

From Monday May 23rd, workers in Southampton CC will take industrial action.

We are taking this action because we are being dismissed and then re-engaged on poorer terms.

We are taking this step with a heavy heart but doing so because

- the city's Conservative Council wants to force through horrific 28% cuts – some £67 million – over a punishing 4 years
- we passionately care about the communities and services of this city
- we are being intimidated into taking pay cuts – or face the sack.

Southampton's people deserve better than Con Cuts

Conservative leader councillor Royston Smith and the Chief Executive Alistair Neill dream of a city that does not provide council services at all. They want Southampton to act only as a purchasers of services - even though one Tory council (Suffolk) recently abandoned similar plans because they were too costly and delivered nothing for local people.

Their dreams will be your nightmare.

The Council claims they need to attack jobs and pay to save services, But if the Council gets its way essential services in Southampton such as the care of our elderly and vulnerable will be handed to profit-driven, unaccountable private companies.

Because we are being sacked for not accepting substantial cuts to pay, Southampton council workers have been forced to take action. From

Monday, May 23rd there will be action throughout the local authority.

Setting the record straight

Southampton CC wants to force through changes which are not in our city's best interests. Read for yourself:

“For ideological reasons we are going for outsourcing, externalisation, privatisation, wherever possible”

Alec Samuels, Tory leader of Southampton City Council, the Daily Echo, 17th October 2008

This is the real reason why Southampton CC is willing to cause chaos in our city.

Workers and their unions, Unison and Unite, accept that the most serious global economic downturn since the 1930s needs us all to cooperate. But while local private sector employers have worked with unions to resolve the difficulties, this council irresponsibly decides to pick a fight.

Rather than negotiate a solution the council wants to impose pay cuts and force through unpaid leave. This is robbery!

Southampton's Conservative administration is using smoke and mirrors to disguise its real plans. They want to con us into thinking they can make massive public spending cuts yet still protect jobs and services.

They cannot. Ordinary people will suffer.

Thousands of public service workers are being dismissed because they won't accept substantial pay cuts. It is trying to deceive YOU, the city's taxpayers while scaring workers into accepting drastic cuts to their pay.

Taxpayers and service users deserve the TRUTH from this Conservative Council.

“We are asking staff to take a modest pay cut to protect jobs and services”

THIS IS NOT TRUE.

The council's own figures show that many low to middle earners will take up to a 17% pay cut over 2 years.

In one case, a care worker on around £17,000 per year, who has to provide her/his own car to deliver essential services to the elderly in Southampton, will lose more than £1,000 per year in mileage allowances alone. That means a 13% pay cut in total over 2 years.

The unions offered a 12 month proposal of pay reductions in return for job security. This was flatly refused at each and every opportunity by Conservative councillors.

The Council wanted employees to agree to permanent pay cuts in return for absolutely no guarantee they wouldn't lose their job anyway. How fair is that?

“The lower paid will even get a slight increase”

THIS IS NOT TRUE.

The Council's own figures show how the lower paid will be hit. A worker earning £12,145 per year would receive an 8% pay cut over 2 years.

“The unions have intimidated workers into voting against our proposals” and “they want a fight pure and simple”

THESE ARE NOT TRUE.

Unite and Unison conducted a postal ballot of all their members to consult on the proposals. This was full and proper consultation – Tory claims suggesting otherwise are an absolute fabrication. We have challenged Council leaders to justify or withdraw them.

It is the Council whose conduct is questionable. They have intimidated and bullied staff. Workers were told it did not matter what they did to try to protect their jobs – they would be sacked anyway, conning many into signing up to the cuts

because they believed they had no choice.

Appallingly, the Chief Executive has presided over this turmoil and distress while raking in his £205,000 annual salary.

Southampton Conservative Council wants the workforce to accept cuts in pay but is refusing to give them any guarantee that jobs and services would be saved in return.

That's why we are now heading for the largest dispute this city has seen for decades.

We are determined to SAVE jobs and services

Along with industrial action to defend Southampton's services, Unite and Unison are mounting a legal challenge. We believe that the Council was in such a rush to force through the cuts that it failed in its duty to consult on them.

Their haste has put them in possible breach of the law.

The people of Southampton are being deliberately misled by the Council. Massive public spending cuts cannot be made without drastically undermining jobs and front-line services. That means hurting YOU.

This £67 million in cuts over 4 years is just the start.

All this strife could be avoided if the Conservative council simply negotiated a time limited settlement that would provide at the very least for a period to jointly examine council spending efficiencies. Both Unite and Unison offered to get the conciliation service ACAS involved in a way to solve the dispute through negotiation. But we have yet to get a reply on this proposal from Southampton CC.

They should set aside their zeal for cuts and put the people of this city first.

Please support us as we take this action and try to restore sense to Southampton council.

Tell your councillor to resolve this dispute by reaching agreement with its workers instead of sacking them.

With many thanks

Southampton's council workers