

MOTION ON NOTICE: DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

City Council: 21 September 2015



**Proposed by Councillor Kate Taylor
Seconded by Councillor Jon Taylor**

DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

Council notes that:

- In July 2015 the Conservative government announced its intention to change legislation affecting trade unions and their members to make it harder to win ballots for industrial action. This will only be lawful if there is a 50% turnout among trade union members entitled to vote in addition to a simple majority voting for industrial action.
- No such thresholds apply to elections in local government, for police and crime commissioners, or in European or Westminster elections.
- The government has refused the request of trade unions to make electronic balloting legally permissible and increase turnout this way.
- Trade unions take industrial action for a wide range of reasons including defending wages and pensions, conditions at work as well as health and safety.

Council believes that:

- The right to strike and protest are fundamental rights that should be respected in a free and democratic society.
- The Conservative government's bill will undermine constructive employment relations and that harmonious industrial relations are achieved by meaningful engagement and not additional legal restrictions to trade union members.
- The government's Trade Union Bill is part of a disturbing trend to erode civil liberties and inhibit the right to speak out or protest against the government.
- The Conservative government's Trade Union Bill is a politically motivated attack on trade unions and could have negative consequences for wider civil society.

Council agrees to –

- (1) write to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills stating this council's opposition to their Trade Union Bill and to participate in any consultations.
- (2) support the South West Trades Union Congress and civil liberties groups in campaigning to defend the right to strike and oppose the Trade Union Bill.
- (3) continue to value the importance of meaningful workforce engagement and representation.