

Barnet UNISON Voice

What's going across London?

At our AGM our members agreed a motion with a series of tasks for the branch to complete. One of them was to '**collate evidence from other branches in order to share their experiences and strategies**'

I have written to London branches get an understanding about what is happening and how the branches are responding. It is important for members for our members to have the opportunity to hear about what is going on in other London councils.
(John Burgess, Branch Secretary Barnet UNISON).



Local Hero

I would like to take an opportunity to talk about a local hero. I refer to Stan Davison. Stan is a leading member of the 55+ Forum in Barnet. I first met Stan in 1998, when I was organised a campaign against the privatisation of our older people's residential & day care services. Sadly we lost the campaign and Fremantle took over our homes and the rest, as they say, is history. I have kept in regular contact with Stan ever since and as is the way whenever services are threatened with closure Stan is always there to speak or simply to show solidarity with those fighting to keep public services for the residents of Barnet. As the years have gone by I have just always assumed Stan would be around and so it was good to be able to chat with him on the '**Protect our Welfare State and Public Services' march and rally.** (**Stan is on my right**). We are going to need a lot more local heroes over the next decade if we are going to hold on to our public services.



Do you know if there are any plans to share services with other public sector organisations in your borough?

Nothing specific has been spelled out as yet, though moves towards shared services have been highlighted as a probable 'direction of travel'.

What is your message to UNISON members that public sector staff must pay for the crisis caused by the bankers?

There is a remarkable basic consensus among the three main parliamentary parties that the public sector and its workforce must pick up the tab

for the **hundreds of billions pumped** into the banks and financial institutions in general.

Members need to realise that the best and probably only serious prospect over the next five years for defending our jobs and the services we provide is through strengthening our collective organisation. We need to demonstrate in practice our willingness to protest on the streets and picket outside our workplaces with other unions where possible UNISON members with the largest proportion of the public sector workforce in our ranks whenever necessary.

Haringey

What is your name?

Sean Fox



to privatise services

Do you know if there are any plans to share services with other public sector organisations in your borough?

There are some early stage proposals floating around for regulatory services in Urban Environment but nothing as of yet which is specific. Last year they explored NNDR with Tower Hamlets and Islington but this appears to have been put on a back burner.

Do you have any privatisation proposals in your borough?

There is nothing new on the agenda at the moment. They **engaged KPMG** to look at our benefits and Local Taxation and '**quelle surprise**' they recommended privatisation. This proposal was rejected.

Has your Council spoken to you about the size of the cuts for next year and beyond?

They have been very vague they are putting a lot of store in what is known as DECATS which is a cross service review of support functions such as admin, HR, finance etc. It is a government sponsored initiative. We believe it will outline potential significant cuts and potentially identify attempts

What is your message to UNISON members that public sector staff must pay for the crisis caused by the bankers?

Simply that we can ill-afford to attack jobs when more not fewer public services are needed. Delimitating the public sector is not the answer. The only answer can be for the banks to pay back all that they took out of the economy in the form of taxation.

Barnet UNISON Contact details

If you have a work problem or query, get in touch with your UNISON workplace representative. Alternatively, you can ring: UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845 If you have a membership or

any other query, please contact the Barnet UNISON office at:

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Southwark

What is your name?

Sue Plain

What UNISON branch?

Southwark Local Government

What is your branch officer position?

Assistant Branch Secretary

Do you have any privatisation proposals in your borough?

We've heard that our revs and bens are coming back **in house!** Also heard that Lambeth and Southwark Labour Parties plan to share a number of chief officers and consultants if they win control at the local elections.

Has your Council spoken to you about the size of the cuts for next year and beyond?

We have been warned about **48 post to be deleted in 2010-11** with another **£3m** savings in finance and admin staff guessed at about **100 jobs**. This totals 148. This is approximately **2% of the workforce**. We've been told that it will be worse in 2011-12 with as much as **20%** being cut from the budget. We've been warned that if **it's not a statutory duty** to provide the council will look at axing services. There isn't much left to outsource and we've been selling a lot of council land (Elephant and Castle and municipal

offices etc) already. The contracts we are in make it difficult to make savings and even if they re-negotiate those contracts to make savings - jobs look likely to be the first thing to go!

Do you know if there are any plans to share services with other public sector organisations in your borough?

Cash-strapped Lambeth Council could share some of its top brass with Southwark if Labour wins both town halls at the next election. Southwark's Labour Party revealed the pre-election gamble to consider merging some services with the neighbouring borough on the same day as their manifesto launch this week. For more details

<http://www.southwarknews.co.uk/00.news.18975.185.00.htm>

What is your message to UNISON members that public sector staff must pay for the crisis caused by the bankers?

Our members are telling us this is unjust. How come when we go bankrupt the banks get all our money and when the banks go bankrupt the banks get all our money? Our members know we will do what we can to fight these cuts and we need them to get organised and recruit their colleagues to make us as strong as we can be to do it!

cently become a shared service with other London Boroughs.

What is your message to UNISON members that public sector staff must pay for the crisis caused by the bankers?

We need to be clear that the recession was caused by bankers and speculators who took advantage of the lack of regulation to make a killing. These people gambled with our economic stability and the cost of bailing them out pushed the government's finances deep into the red. Public services, those who work in them and those who rely on them, should not have to pay for a crisis that was not of their making. Cuts in public services will do untold damage to those services, damage local economies and ultimately impair the economic recovery. Politicians from the three main political parties are calling for cuts in public services and public sector pay. Often privatisation is seen as the only solution. There is an alternative. Alternative savings can be made by :

fairer tax, a curb on tax relief for the rich, a levy on financial transactions and a diet for the fat cat bankers and their bonus cheques, the cancellation of Trident, getting rid of central government private consultants and bringing PFI schemes back in house.

A crisis made by mistakes in the financial sector is not going to be solved by cutting public services. UNISON members need to pledge their support for UNISON's **'A Million Voices for Change Campaign'** with its agenda for a strong economy, a fair society and a call for social justice, good jobs and quality public services.

I would also urge Unison members to think very carefully about who they give their vote to in the forthcoming General and Local Elections.

Brent

What is your name?

Phil O'Reilly


What UNISON branch?

Brent Unison Local Government Branch

What is your branch officer position?

Branch Secretary

Do you have any privatisation proposals in your borough?

Unfortunately, in recent years some of our services have been privatised. The latest victim is a residential and respite care service for people with learning disabilities. The privatisation of this service has been quite controversial but the

push to privatise was relentless. It is a concern that some of the smaller contracts slip through the net as they are often privatised without much consultation with trade unions.

Has your Council spoken to you about the size of the cuts for next year and beyond?

Yes. The Council has announced they need to make savings of nearly **£54 million** by **2013/14**. It has stated the workforce needs to be reduced by **10%**. Currently, a voluntary severance scheme is in operation and there are a number of other 'efficiency measures'.

Do you know if there are any plans to share services with other public sector organisations in your borough?

Yes, our Occupational Health Service has re-

Camden

What is your name?

George Binette


What UNISON branch?

Camden Local Government

What is your branch officer position?

Branch Secretary

Do you have any privatisation proposals in your borough?

The recruitment function covering both agency staff and the directly employed Camden workforce is about to be outsourced (from the beginning of May) to Hays as a result of an Executive decision taken in July last year. Only a handful (five) staff will now be directly affected, but this is the first instance of a privatisation where the contractor has explicitly rejected any obligation to pay future NJC pay awards on the basis of the Court of Appeal's ruling in the case of Parkwood Leisure v Alemo-Herron and others, rendered at the end of January this year. Camden is now going along with the interpretation of the ruling provided by Hays' legal team.

There are some other potential outsourcings connected with aspects of Building Schools for the

Future, while we envisage the possibility of a greatly expanded call centre operation being an eventual target for privatisation and quite possibly relocation, though at this stage there is no hard evidence of anything beyond the loss of existing Camden jobs in a range of services as a result of the so-called Customer Service (Transformation) Programme.

In 2009/early 2010 Camden witnessed the outsourcing of community meals to a firm called Fresh CM, homecare provision to four different private firms. Estate cleaning was outsourced to the French-based multinational Veolia, on the basis of a curious **£1.6 million variation** in its existing long-term contract with Camden for refuse and recycling collection and street cleansing.

Has your Council spoken to you about the size of the cuts for next year and beyond?

There was a briefing by the Head of Organisational Development and the Deputy Director of Finance at the end of January 2010, which suggested that there were no new cuts in the pipeline for the current financial year (2010-11), but that the axe would swing in earnest from next year with a project budget gap of some **£59 million to be closed over the next three years**.