

## **UNISON City of Edinburgh Local Government and Related Sectors Branch**

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### **MINUTES OF THE RECALL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on 9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2009 in the ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH, LOTHIAN ROAD, EDINBURGH**

#### **1. OPENING REMARKS/ INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was chaired by Branch President.

At this point of the meeting the Branch President paid a tribute to John Mulgrew, Service Conditions Coordinator who sadly died on 4th August 2008.

John served the branch for some 20 years and had been our lead negotiator and secretary of the Staff Side of all non-teaching trade unions since UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch was formed in 1996.

The branch paid tribute to John at his funeral and in the commemoration of a tree to his memory in Princes Street Gardens on 1st December 2008.

#### **2. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINEERS**

Four Scrutineers were appointed:-

Walter Weir (Services for Communities) Caroline MacLean (Services for Communities) Mo Innes (Health & Social Care) Elaine Wishart (Corporate Services)

The Branch President apologised that due to a formatting error some motions were missing from the minutes of the 2008 AGM. This has been corrected on the branch website and a corrected copy of the minutes were included in the supplementary agenda circulated to the meeting.

The supplementary agenda also has amendments to motions 1, 4 and 14 and the biographical details of candidates standing for the contested posts.

The Branch President advised the meeting no election was now required for the Service Conditions Convener (Manual) post as Tam McKirdy and Walter Weir had agreed to job share the post. There was no election required for the Service Conditions Officer post as Jim Quinn and Irene Stout have agreed to job share.

### **3. STANDING ORDERS**

The Branch Standing Orders were AGREED for the following year without amendment.

### **4. MINUTES OF BRANCH MEETING 2007**

The minutes of the last Branch Annual General meeting of 18th February 2008 were AGREED as a correct record with no matters arising.

### **5. ANNUAL REPORT 2008**

No questions were raised on the Annual Report

### **6. FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

The meeting AGREED the financial statement as detailed in the Annual Report.

At this point of the meeting the President sought the AGM's approval to give priority to Motion 9 which refers to a transfer of branch funds and should be read in conjunction with the Financial Statement.

### **Motion 9 - Transfer of Branch Funds**

*Proposed by John Ross (Services for Communities) and Mike McCrossan (Services for Communities)*

This meeting supports and homologates the decision of branch officers to transfer monies during the past financial year towards the Branch Hardship Fund and the Branch Premises Fund. We do so in recognition that the potential for industrial action in the coming year on issues such as Job Evaluation and Pay Modernisation requires contingency measures at this stage. Also we recognise the accessibility of the branch office remains a problem and we continue to seek alternative accommodation.

Branch Officers should continue to monitor finances in the coming year and to take appropriate action to ensure branch funds are directed to the benefit of the membership.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

## **7. SPECIAL REPORTS**

The meeting received updates on the ongoing negotiations/discussions on the following matters:-  
Single Status/Pay Negotiations (Kevin Duguid)  
Equal Pay (John Ross)

## **8. ELECTION OF BRANCH**

## **OFFICERS**

The undernoted were elected unopposed:

President: John Stevenson (Children & Families)

Chairperson: Duncan Smith (Services for Communities)

Vice-Chairperson Rose Jackson (Health & Social Care)

Secretary: Agnes Petkevicius (Children & Families)

Assistant Secretary: Luke Henderson (Services for Communities)

Treasurer: Mike McCrossan (Services for Communities) and John Stevenson (Children and Families)

Service Conditions Co-ordinator: Kevin Duguid (Finance)

Service Conditions Convener (APT&C): John Ross (Services for Communities)

Service Conditions Convener (Craft): Walter Weir (Services for Communities)

Service Conditions Convener (Manual): Tam McKirdy and Walter Weir (Services for Communities)

Equalities Officer: Irene Stout (Services for Communities)

Welfare Officer: (Job-Share) Gillian Allan (LVJB)/Mike Smith (Finance)

International Officer: Matthew Creighton (Associated Bodies)

Recruitment/Membership Officer: Irene Heggie (Finance)

Young Members Officer:  
Gem Hogan (Children & Families) and  
James Wilson (Services for  
Communities)  
Health & Safety Officer: Hugh Menzies  
(Finance) and Lorraine Paterson  
(Services for Communities)  
Service Conditions Officer:  
Tom Connolly (Children & Families)  
Agnes Petkevicius (Children &  
Families)  
Irene Stout (Services for  
Communities)/Jim Quinn (Corporate  
Services) job-share  
Elaine Wishart (Corporate Services)

**Election required for the following  
Branch Officer post(s):**

Lifelong Learning: Following a ballot  
Ishbel Foster (Health & Social Care)  
was elected to the post.

Education Officer: Following a ballot  
Hugh MacDonald (Services for  
Communities) was elected to the post.

**9. RULE CHANGES**

As a result of a decision of the 2007 AGM to review the rules in light of Single Status to reflect that there will no longer be APT&C and Manual grades. Branch Officers had a special seminar to review the current branch rules and in light of core branch rule changes, to reflect common practice, to review the duties of some Branch Officers in terms of branch development and to correct anomalies in a rule

book that was originally written when the branch was being formed from four NALGO and NUPE branches.

Due to the high volume of Rule Changes the Branch President sought the meeting's approval to have all Rule Changes moved formally by the movers and go to debate only if a member wishes to oppose the change or seek more detail. The meeting AGREED to this action.

## **Rule Changes**

***All Rule changes were Proposed by John Ross (SFC), Agnes Petkevicius (Children & Families)***

### **1. Rule A.11 Communication**

In a) add at end "and newsheets as appropriate"

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **2. Rule A.13 Affiliations**

a) Replace "APF" with "Labour Link"

c) Replace "whose aims affect those of UNISON" with "consistent with the national union's policies and rules."

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **3. Rule A.15 Annual Report**

c) Replace "Attendances at Branch Committees, Sub Committees and Scottish Council" with "Attendances at Branch Committees, Scottish Regional Council and Scottish Local Government Conference."

d) Replace “A report on Branch Committee decisions during the year” with “A report on Branch activities during the year.”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

#### **4. Rule B.1 Branch Structure**

a) After “There will be an Annual General Meeting of the Branch to elect” add “, or confirm the election by ballot of”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

#### **5. Rule B.2 Branch Audits**

Renumber Para 1 as a) and delete “APT&C, Manual” and replace with “General Grade workers based on the appropriate pay spine/scale”

Renumber Para 2 as b) and delete “black, lesbian and gay, disabled members” and replace with “numbers of members who wish to be identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members or black members or disabled”

Renumber Para 3 as c).

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

#### **6. Rule B.3 Proportionality**

In first paragraph, delete from “but recognises..” to “meaningful” and replace with “and to that end will promote the following measures:”

In Point 1, delete “therefore” in line 1 and “new” in line 3. In Point 2 a) add “on the same basis” at the end.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

## **7. Rule B.4 Quorum**

In Point 2, delete “would” in the first line and “proposed” in the fourth line.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

## **8. Rule B.5 Fair Representation**

In first paragraph, delete all instances of “APT&C and Manual and Craft” and replace with “all categories and terms of conditions”.

In Point 1, delete “At Service Conditions Convener level, there will be posts for APT&C, Manual and Craft” and replace with “To facilitate these principles Convener posts will be established to recognise both General Graded posts and Craft posts supplemented by other Convener posts as agreed by a Branch Annual General Meeting”

In Point 3, delete “black, disabled and lesbian and gay” and replace with “black members, disabled members and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender”

In Point 5, delete from “The triple track approach” to “at workplace level.” And replace with “Activists should be encouraged to become familiar with all sets of conditions and the requirements of individual occupational groupings both within their local workplace and elsewhere in the branch”

Delete Points 6 and 7 and renumber Point 8 as 6.

In existing Point 8, delete from “In the meantime” to “sub-groups” and replace with “In instances where an occupational group is based in one department it will be the responsibility of that Shop Stewards Committee to ensure the members’ interests are represented and protected. Where there is more



than one department involved the responsibility to coordinate the representation and protection of members will lie with the Branch Committee. At all times actions and decisions will be in accordance with union policy”.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **9. Rule B.6 Branch Employed Staff Structures**

In Point a), delete “Convener (or nominee), Branch Treasurer and three members elected by the Branch Policy and Finance Committee” and replace with. “Coordinator (or nominee), Branch Treasurer, Equalities Officer and three members elected by the Branch Committee. - NOTE: In Recruitment and Selection processes a panel member must have evidenced they have gone through appropriate training.”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **10. Rule C.1 Preamble**

In second paragraph, delete “The Committee will elect from its body a Shop Stewards Convener and two Vice Conveners, one representing APT&C members and the other Manual members. Where a department consists entirely of APT&C, Manual or Craft workers, only one Vice Convener will be necessary.” and replace with “The Committee will elect from its body a Shop Stewards Convener and a Vice Convener.”

In seventh paragraph, delete “(e.g. Community Education, Residential Care etc)”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

## **11. Rule C.2 Shop Stewards Committee Meetings**

In Point 5 b), delete “Guide negotiations with Departmental management, in consultation with Branch Co-Ordinator and Conveners, SC Officers and other Shop Stewards Committees where necessary” and replace with “Guide negotiations with departmental management having sought, where appropriate, advice/participation from Branch Officers and /or other committees involved in the subject matter.”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

## **12. Rule C.4 Election of Shop Stewards**

Add new point 3 as follows and renumber following points. “3. In the event of a workplace meeting or ballot not taking place, details of any nominees along with an explanation should be forwarded to the Branch Secretary by the Departmental Convener. Such instances will be referred to the Branch Committee for their consideration and decision”

In existing Point 3, after the word “for” in the first line, add “representation purposes”.

Delete “and have returned the duplicate to the branch office” and replace with “, returned the duplicate to the Branch Office and have undergone any statutory training requirements.”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

## **13. Rule D Branch Organisation**

Delete first paragraph beginning “Separate structures...”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

#### **14. Rule D.2 Branch Committee - Structure**

2 d) In first line Delete “Lesbian and Gay” and replace with “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Group”

In fourth line, Delete “Lesbian and Gay group” and replace with “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Group”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

#### **15. Rule D.4 Service Conditions Team**

4 d) Delete “(prior to the Service Conditions Committee)”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

#### **16. Rule D.5 Equalities Sub-Committee**

5.4 Delete “within the authority”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

#### **17. Rule D.6 Health & Safety Sub-Committee**

6.1 b) Delete “(1 APT&C and 1 Manual or Craft)”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

#### **18. Rule D.7 Education & Communications Sub-Committee**

7.3 e) Delete “10 times a year is the guideline” and replace with “supplemented by newssheets as appropriate”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **19. Rule D.10 Self Organised Group Structures**

10.1 Delete “lesbian and gay” and replace with “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender”

10.4 Delete “without reference to the Branch Committee” and replace with “through mechanisms put in place by the Branch Equalities Officer on behalf of the Policy and Finance Committee,”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **20. Rule D.13 Self Organised Group Structures**

10.1 Delete “lesbian and gay” and replace with “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender”

10.4 Delete “without reference to the Branch Committee” and replace with “through mechanisms put in place by the Branch Equalities Officer on behalf of the Policy and Finance Committee,”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **21. Rule D.14 Retired Members Section**

Delete “D.5” at end.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **22. Rule E.1 Branch Officers**

1a) Delete “19, 20 and 21” and replace with “19-22”

1b) Delete “14, 19, 20 and 21” and change “E20” to “E21”. Delete all instances of “APF” and replace with “Labour Link”.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **23. Rule E.2 Role of Branch President**

1. Delete “more hands on branch role” and replace with “direct involvement in branch affairs as required”

2 ) Delete “and” and replace with “and/or”.

4. Delete all and replace with “He/She will be a member of the Service Conditions Team and will chair relevant meetings. He/She will convene meetings as required of the Team outwith their regular meetings”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **24. Rule E.8 Role of Branch Equalities Officer**

3. Delete “Will convene and attend monthly meetings of the Equalities Sub Committee” and replace with “Will convene and attend bi-monthly meetings of the Equalities Sub Committee” .

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **25. Rule E.10 Role of Branch Service Conditions Coordinator**

In third paragraph delete “Conveners” and replace with, “Convener” .

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **26. Rule E.11 Role of Branch Service Conditions Conveners (3)**

Rename Rule as “Role of Branch Service Conditions Convener”

Delete Point 1 and replace with "The Service Conditions Convener will work in conjunction with the Branch Service Conditions Coordinator as well as addressing general Service Conditions demands. The postholders' activities will include the following: in addition to substituting for the duties of the Service Conditions Coordinator as required:-" .

Delete Point 2.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **27. Rule E.12 Role of Branch Service Conditions Officers (4)**

Delete "(4)" in title and replace with "(5)"

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **28. New Rule E.13 Role of Branch Service Conditions Convener, Craft Workers**

Add new Rule E.13 "Role of Branch Service Conditions Convener, Craft Workers. The postholder will fulfil the same role as a Branch Service Conditions Officer but will take a lead role in all matters relating to members contracted to Craft Workers Terms and Conditions of Service."

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **29. Rule E.13 Role of Branch Communications Officer**

2 a) Delete "(10 issues are recommended and at least not less than 6 times a year)" and replace with "supplemented by targeted newssheets"

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **30. Rule E.16 Role of Branch Education Officer**

Add new point “h) providing support for shop stewards and shop stewards’ organisation in the Branch”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **31. Rule E.21 Role of APF Officer**

Delete “APF” in title and throughout and replace with “Labour Link”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **32. Rule F.21 Representation of members in Service Conditions Issues**

In Point 4 delete “the Authority’s” and replace with “an Employer’s”

In Point 6 delete “Conditions of Service Convener” and insert “Service Conditions Coordinator”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **33. Rule G.6 Branch Meetings**

Delete first paragraph and replace with “There will be an Annual General Meeting of the Branch”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **34. Rule H.4 Order of Business**

Delete H.4.6 (h) and (i) and replace with “(h) Branch Service Conditions Convener” and renumber following paragraphs.

In existing Rule H.4.6 (k) delete “(4)” and insert “(5)” and delete “at least two” and insert “at least three”

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **35. Rule H.8 Notices of Motion**

Add at beginning "Motions may be proposed by any two members, the branch committee or a properly constituted shop stewards committee or self organised group."

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **36. Rule H.9 Amendment to a Motion**

Delete all and insert "9.1 Amendments may be proposed by any two members, the branch committee or a properly constituted shop stewards committee or self organised group. An amendment to a motion shall be submitted, in writing, to the Branch Secretary not less than 3 days prior to the start of the meeting and will be moved, provided the amendment:-

- a) is relevant, competent and intelligible as regards the proposal it is intended to amend;
- b) does not alter the motion in such a way as to make it virtually a new motion;
- c) does not imply mere negation;

9.2 When an amendment to a motion is moved, no further amendment may be moved until the first one is disposed of, subject to 9.3 below.

- a) When an amendment is defeated, a further amendment may be moved to the original motion.
- b) When an amendment to a motion is carried, the motion, as so amended, shall become the substantive motion, to which a further amendment may be moved.



c) A member shall not move more than one amendment to any one motion, nor shall the mover of a motion move any amendment to such motion.

9.3. Where, in the view of the Chairperson of the meeting, separate debates on specified motions and/or amendments dealing with the same subject matter would lead to undue repetition in the debates, a grouped debate and/or sequential voting may be adopted by the meeting. The following procedure will be followed:

a) The Chairperson will advise the meeting of the order of business and of the sequence in which motions and amendments will be moved and voted on following a general debate, and of the effect of certain proposals on others.

b) All motions and amendments included in the debate shall be moved.

c) The general debate shall take place.

d) The Chairperson shall again state the order of voting and shall advise the meeting which, if any, motions or amendments will fall if others are carried.

e) Voting will take place on motions, preceded by relevant amendments, in the order in which they were moved."

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **37. Rule H.19 Elections**

Delete all and insert

"\*19 Nominations for Office-Bearer posts must be made by any two members or a properly constituted shop stewards committee and, except in the case of job-share nominations, they may make only one

nomination for any individual post. Nominations must be submitted at least 21 days (11 days in respect of Departmental elections) before the meeting and should carry the signature of the two nominators or, in the case of a nomination from a shop stewards committee, the signature of the convener of that committee with a copy of the relevant minute. All nominations shall be confirmed by the Branch Secretary with the nominated individual(s).

\*19.1 Any Branch Officer vacancies following or arising after the AGM may be filled by the Branch Committee. In such case the 11 day timescale for nominations will apply."

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **38. New Rule H.20**

Insert new Rule 20 as follows: "\*20. Job-share nominations may only be made with the prior agreement of the candidates concerned and, if a vote is required, they will be voted upon as if they were one candidate." And renumber following paragraphs.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **39. Existing Rule H.23**

In 23(2) add "and the terms of the motion to be debated." at end.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

### **40. Existing Rule H.25**

Delete "23 (2)" and replace with "24 (2)"

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Rule Change were AGREED.

## **10. POLICY MOTIONS**

### **1. Council Review Procedures - Potential Libraries' Action**

*Proposed by John Ross (Services for Communities)*

*Irene Stout (Services for Communities)*

The meeting views with concern the manner in which the council is now using Review Procedures as a means to impact on terms and conditions and continuing employment rights. This has been highlighted by the recent review of the Library Service with Services for Communities.

During this exercise management have strived to enforce their contention that all current posts have been deleted and replaced with new posts for which individuals would have to apply for and undergo full recruitment and selection processes including interview. They also contend that as all posts are 'new' they can apply different terms and conditions.

This meeting agrees in the strongest terms this is an unacceptable approach to organisational change and that we will seek union support at all levels to oppose such actions.

At this time we commit ourselves to support our colleagues in the Library Service by any means required up to and including industrial action.

### **Amendment to Motion 1**

*Proposed: Amanda Kerr (Services for Communities)*

*Seconded: Jill Marple (Services for Communities)*

Begin third paragraph as follows: "We welcome management's recognition of our members' concerns and that purposeful negotiations are now ongoing to facilitate a mutually acceptable review outcome."

Delete last paragraph and replace with "We call upon Branch Officers to negotiate a corporate protocol for the assignment and matching to posts affected by review processes."

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion as amended was AGREED.

## **2. Home Care Cuts and Privatisation**

*Proposed by Health & Social Care Shop Stewards Committee*

This AGM notes that cuts and privatisation of our Home Care services continues. The department of Health & Social Care envisage that 75% of Home Care will be delivered by the private sector within 5-6 years. At present this is approximately 55%.

This is being implemented alongside a policy of "re-able" where some service-users are given an in-house service for 4-6 weeks after which their care may be cut and privatised. The policy of re-able is that people are helped to be as independent as possible. No-one would argue with this as a theory. However, we have serious reservations that it is being used as a justification for cuts and privatisation.

In November 2007, a campaign was set up to publicly campaign against this. Since then, our evidence - and we have plenty - bears out our concern; namely that service-users are not receiving

the quality of service they previously had and staff are under unbearable pressure to deliver basic services.

Much is made to Councillors of the lower costs of the private sector. But we know this isn't the whole story. Often when they have a large section of the work, they increase their prices. Staff tend to be very low paid, don't enjoy fair conditions and stay for only a short time. This reflects badly on the quality of care delivered.

We ask this AGM to affirm its continuing support for this campaign and its opposition to cuts and privatisation. We also recognise that many Council sections and departments face cuts and privatisation. We actively support all struggles, campaign, etc against these and hope we can give support and strength as necessary.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

### **3. Underfunding of Children's Services**

*Proposed by John Stevenson (Children and Families)*

*John Ross (Services for Communities)*

This branch welcomes the various UNISON responses to the aftermath of the death of 'Baby P' and to the second Laming inquiry. While these responses focus primarily on children's services in England and the legal context (for example, the Children's Hearing system) is different in Scotland, this branch believes that many of the problems identified are common across all social work services.

These include:-

1. Continuing chronic underfunding of children's services, both locally and nationally. In 2006/7 Scottish local authorities spent an average of 70% over the Scottish Government's Grant Aided Expenditure on children's services. This has not changed materially since the 'concordat' between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and in many areas the pressures on funding have hugely increased.
2. Unrealistically low staffing levels and continuing vacancies. In real terms, frontline qualified staff in children and families social work have been cut despite the increased pressures and expectations on social work.
3. An 'inspection culture' which focuses on achieving often meaningless targets while ignoring whether expected standards can be achieved within the resources currently allocated. This leads to priorities being set on bureaucratic indicators rather than real practice outcomes.
4. A focus from the Scottish Social Services Council which concentrates on sanctions against practitioners while failing to exercise any meaningful sanctions related to its other duty of ensuring employers deliver on their side of the codes of conduct, including providing adequate resources.
5. An increase in the time front-line staff are having to spend on recording data primarily for statistical purposes, often related to inspections, at the

expense of direct service-user contact. The problem is increased by the lack of admin support.

6. A growing managerialist approach which fails to support front-line staff and acknowledge their crucial task of working with intense and complex situations.

7. Increasing and unmanageable caseloads. These issues, among others, have led to a general feeling throughout the workforce that the system is unsafe. Practitioners are justified in believing that they will be held responsible for any tragedy irrespective of whether they were adequately supported or resourced.

While it is unrealistic to expect no child will ever come to harm, it is realistic to expect that the government and local authorities should face up to their responsibilities to adequately resource children's services.

This branch therefore calls for:-

1. A continuing campaign to expose the resource crisis in children's services involving research into caseloads and practices and regular publicity on the issue to ensure that the public and decision-makers are made aware of the seriousness of the situation.

2. A national review of staffing and caseloads which recognises the complexity of the service and real time required to fulfil the task.

3. A governmental and local authority strategy that owns up to the problem and sets out a plan to invest

in frontline Children and Families social work at a level that makes the task realistic. This should involve the trade unions and other stakeholders.

4. Call on UNISON to co-ordinate meetings of members and workshops/conference as necessary to continue the process of gathering evidence of the difficulties faced by front-line Children and Families social work staff.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

#### **4. The Next Pay Claim - Members' Involvement**

*Proposed by John Stevenson (Children and Families),  
John Ross (Services for Communities)*

This AGM welcomes the UNISON Scottish Local Government Committee review of the 2008 Pay Campaign, called for by this Branch, which will look at:-

1. Lessons from the claim itself and how it developed
2. Lessons from the joint union campaign
3. An analysis of communication and leadership issues
4. Implications for future collective bargaining.

This AGM believes that any claim must address low pay and is best united around if members can play a full part in deciding the claim themselves.



This AGM therefore instructs Branch Officers to mount a major consultation exercise after the review is published in April 2009 to give all members a say in the next pay claim and campaign. As well as usual workplace meetings, the consultation should involve new ways of involving members, for example, a website forum, surveys, small groups, workshops and other ways of ensuring as many members as possible have their say.

#### **Amendment to Motion 4**

*Proposed: Marlyn Tweedie (Health & Social Care)*

*Seconded: Mary McCrea (Health & Social Care)*

Add the following at the end:-

“This AGM supports a flat-rate pay increase. It therefore instructs the delegates to this year’s Scottish Local government Conference to argue for a flat rate increase as a basis for future pay claims starting from 2010”.

#### **Amendment lost**

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

#### **5. Car Mileage Rates**

*Proposed by Irene Stout (Services for Communities),*

*Mike McCrossan (Service For Communities)*

This meeting considers the removal of Essential Car Allowance payments has been to the detriment of members of staff who, in the interests of their services to the community, require access to personal transport. There is no doubt that if members, individually or collectively, decide that it is no longer in their interest to provide a vehicle on a casual basis

to fulfil their responsibilities there would be an impact on service provision.

It is clear that employers have now settled upon localised arrangements based on casual payments with Inland Revenue guidelines being generally applied.

This meeting supports branch officers in seeking upgraded mileage payments given the Inland Revenue guidance has not been updated for several years. It notes that action on car mileage rates was agreed at National Local Government Service Group Conference 2008 and supported by this Branch. This AGM instructs Branch Officers to seek an urgent update on progress on this.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

## **6. Equalities Commission**

*Proposed by Irene Stout (Services for Communities),  
Dot Paterson (Health and Social Care)*

This meeting welcomes the principles of the Equality Bill which was referred to in the Queen's Speech in December 2008 and which will be the subject of consultation during spring 2009.

Whilst recognising the intent of reinforcing fairness in society we consider that the principles highlighted to date are high on rhetoric but low in substance. We view it as essential that the widest possible involvement of UNISON is essential if we are to represent fully the interests of our members in legislative amendments which will impact both within their employment and within their personal lives.

We therefore call upon UNISON Scotland to call a seminar involving all stakeholders with a view to taking forward a consensual response during the consultation period. It is also essential that we strive to ensure maximum media coverage on the contents of that submission.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

## **7. Stewards Accreditation**

*Proposed by Dot Paterson (Health and Social Care),  
Irene Stout (Services for Communities)*

This meeting notes the legislative requirements for the accreditation of Shop Stewards via formalised training programmes. It is of concern that there has been a growing number of instances where management have refused the required time off for training on the basis that service contingencies are paramount.

Such a response restricts the abilities of the union and Shop Stewards to fully represent the interests of the membership.

We therefore call upon the union to seek statutory rights to time off with training for Shop Stewards which would replicate the provisions currently in place for Health & Safety representatives.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

## **8. Public Sector Pensions**

*Proposed by John Ross (Service for Communities),  
Irene Stout (Service for Communities)*

This meeting condemns the continuing media and political attacks on Public Sector Pensions.

Comments from Tory politicians like, “Pensions Apartheid” and “gilt edged” and Lib Dem statements that our pensions are “unsustainable and unaffordable” must be challenged.

The reality is that the average local government pensioner receives only £74 per week. Attacks pensions not only affect the lowest paid, they also add a further tax burden in having to pay additional welfare benefits. Public Sector pensions are deferred wages. They are paid through workers' contributions and by wage levels that reflect pension costs.

This Branch supports affordable pensions for all workers and believes that any solution should be based on levelling up, making private companies face up to their responsibilities, not cutting public sector pensions.

The campaign to defend our pensions must start now to be ready to challenge politicians in the run up to elections. We therefore call upon the union at all levels to seek comment from politicians from all parties and to highlight responses to our membership with a view to initiating a campaign to profile the value of public services and the providers of those services.

The union should also mount a media campaign to inform the public of the reality of how our pensions

are funded. We also call upon Labour Link to take on this campaign.

## **10. Strike Pay – Pension Contributions and National Insurance**

*Proposed by John Ross (Services for Communities),  
Elaine Wishart (Corporate Services)*

This branch supports the principle that selective strike action can be influential in periods of industrial dispute with employers. We recognise that in such situations we are dependent on direct action from specific groups of members rather than the total membership.

In normal circumstances the union would undertake to recompense loss of take-home pay either through payments from the national body and/or supplemented by local finances. It is, however, of concern that current practice does not provide for payment towards employer pension contributions which results in long term loss for those involved in selective action. There are also issues pertaining to National Insurance contributions.

We therefore call upon the NEC to put in place any measures required to maintain pension levels and to consolidate National Insurance contributions for those who take action on behalf of their colleagues.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

## **11. Climate Change Concerns Action**

*Proposed by Matthew Crighton (Associated Bodies),  
Paul Clarke (Services for Communities)*

This meeting recognises the need for urgent action to be taken to address the damage Climate Change is causing to our planet.

**Workplace activities and negotiations:** We call upon our branch/our employer/our union to immediately implement a range of measures to address the environmental devastation being caused by Climate Change. We will initiate joint environmental committees and call for and seek to negotiate joint climate change action plans/green workplace action plans for each employer, department and major workplace.

We will seek to create the role of environmental representative who will co-ordinate UNISON input into these action plans; accountable to the appropriate local union structures, e.g. Stewards Committees. This role can be taken by existing stewards or H&S representatives; or, where there are joint plans or negotiations with employers to create them, they may be nominated by stewards committees.

We will arrange appropriate training for UNISON representatives to be able to carry this forward. The branch creates an Environmental “steering group” to raise the profile / awareness of environmental issues. It will also consider the option of a future rule change giving formal status to the role of environmental representatives.

We will seek to negotiate facility time and joint training for these activities. We call on the City of Edinburgh Council and other employers to agree a Climate Change Plan with UNISON and to provide

funding to invest in proposals which can provide cost-efficient reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Campaigning**

We aim to increase campaigning activity in the coming year, focusing on strong and binding legislation at Scottish and UK levels and at the UN talks in Copenhagen. As well as agreement on targets for emissions reductions UNISON should campaign for:

The UK and Scottish government to produce realistic conversion plans for the achievement of these targets within their own economies; and to immediately change current policies which are inconsistent, e.g. on aviation expansion, road building.

A duty on all publicly-funded bodies and major private employers to consider climate change in all decisions and report on progress annually, with negotiated green workplace agreements.

A binding international treaty which requires developed countries to meet stringent emission reductions targets, a financial mechanism to support developing countries in: implementation of their plans and programmes for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change, and which subordinates other international bodies like the WTO and IMF to the objective of an environmentally sustainable and just development of the world economy.

We aim to organise a city wide campaign involving as many groups etc including e.g. Trades Council to build for the Scottish Climate Bill rally on 22nd April 2009 at the Scottish Parliament.

We will participate in activities aimed at maximising public mobilisations around the Copenhagen Treaty and the talks leading up to it.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

## **12. Welfare of all Children Paramount**

*Proposed by John Stevenson (Children and Families),  
John Ross (Services for Communities)*

This AGM notes with pride that a motion from this Branch has resulted in a Scottish UNISON/BASW Guide on supporting Asylum Seeker and Unaccompanied/Separated Children and ultimately a UK UNISON Guide - both to support our Social Work members in ethical practice.

It restates the principle that children living in Scotland have the same rights under Scottish legislation irrespective of their immigration status and the local authority has the same duty towards them.

While much has yet to be done, this Branch welcomes the results of the wider campaign which include:-

1. Leave being given to 1,100 families to remain in Scotland
2. A 'lead professional' to ensure children's welfare is addressed



3. An inspection process for immigration services
4. A requirement for immigration staff dealing with children to be Disclosure checked
5. The 'welfare of the child' principle being included in Home Office Guidance
6. Forthcoming legislation which will impose a statutory duty of the 'welfare principle' on immigration services.
7. The removal by the UK Government of its reservation from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This branch pledges continuing support for the work on this campaign.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion were AGREED.

### **13. Edinburgh World Justice Festival 21-23 May 2009**

*Proposed by Matthew Crighton (Associated Bodies), Paul Clarke (Services for Communities)*

This meeting agrees to support the Edinburgh World Justice Festival in 2009. It welcomes the sponsorship of the Festival in 2008 by UNISON Scotland and calls for this arrangement to continue in 2009.

It believes that the Festival should be an opportunity for raising the public profile of pressing issues relating to social and environmental justice world-wide and that it should be an opportunity for dialogue with organisations and activists from across the world. In order to enable their messages to be heard we urge that UNISON works with the EWJF to organise a high-impact launch event which will use video-

conferencing and related technology to achieve these objectives.

## **Referred to Branch Committee**

### **14. A Response to the Crisis**

*Proposed by Luke Henderson (Services for Communities), Rory Gardner (Services for Communities)*

This Branch recognises that the economic crisis which is unfolding round the world will have a massive impact on working people and their families.

The crisis is showing that the market left to itself is not a self-regulating system but is prone to disruptions which now threaten millions with the loss of their jobs, homes, and pensions.

The key issue is who will pay for the crisis. While £billions of public funds have been promised to bail out the bankers unemployment has risen steeply and the government has done little in practice to help workers being laid off through no fault of their own.

There will be attempts however to shift the blame away from the millionaire Chief Executives in banking and finance. Already the mouthpiece of big business the CBI has tried to create hostility amongst workers in private firms by claiming pensions in the Public Sector are a drain on resources.

In contrast this Branch agrees with the statement by UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis on 3rd December that: ' It's the workers, vulnerable people,

pensioners, and people living on benefits who pay the price of the crisis.'

This Branch believes firstly therefore that UNISON nationally must demand that the government:

(1) ensures that banks and businesses that are bailed out with public funds are nationalised under genuinely democratic control as part of a planned approach to deal with the crisis;

(2) imposes a windfall tax on the energy multinationals and uses it to tackle fuel poverty;

(3) instructs the banks in receipt of public funding to cease house repossessions;

(4) launches a nation-wide house building programme to bring construction workers back into employment and solve the crisis of homelessness

5) Embark on real investment across the public services to boost the economy and build and maintain the infrastructure to speed up the recovery process.

This Branch believes secondly that UNISON must act in a concerted way at all levels with other trade unions in the private or public sectors to defend workers under threat by:

(a) supporting workers taking action to defend their jobs, pay, conditions, or pensions;

b) proposing that the Edinburgh Trades Council launch an Anti- Cuts Campaign and makes the annual May Day rally a focus for a united fight back;

(c) calling on the Scottish Region of UNISON to work with STUC to plan a day of solidarity between unions in defence of workers jobs, conditions, and rights;

(d) call on the British TUC to organise a Day of Action and a National Demonstration.

### **Amendment to Motion 14**

*Proposed: John Stevenson (Children & Families) and John Ross (Services for Communities)*

Insert new para after fifth paragraph:-

This branch rejects the attacks on the public sector by business leaders who are trying to divert the blame from their own excesses and mistakes. The fact is that investment in public services is needed to boost the economy as well as to meet the increasing demand as people turn to those public services to help them cope with the recession.

Delete Point 3) and replace with:-

(3) instructs the banks who have received public funding to adopt a socially responsible approach and avoid house repossessions through mortgage breaks and other strategies;

Delete point d) and replace with:-

(d) call on UNISON to work with the TUC and STUC to promote these policies and organise whatever demonstrations or events are required to support them.

**Decision:** On being put to the meeting the terms of the Motion as amended were AGREED.

At this point of the meeting the Chair advised the AGM was closed with all remaining motions and vacant Branch Officers posts being remitted to the Branch Committee for decision and action.