

## **CONSULTATION ON REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION RESPONSE FROM GMB**

Please accept this email as my formal response to the Council's proposals to end facility time in Bromley and for presentation to the Members.

The GMB is disappointed with the Council's approach on this matter and would like to address the following points:-

The terminology to describe the role and work of the trade unions is highly disappointing and seems politically loaded. To use the phrase 'tax payer expense' is misleading and in fact wholly incorrect. It is well documented that trade union facility time actually saves employers money and therefore is a benefit for the tax payers of Bromley.

The former Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) found in 2007 that the work of union reps resulted in;

- Savings to employers and the exchequer of between £22m - £43m as a result of reducing the number of Employment Tribunal cases;
- Benefits to society worth between £136m - £371m as a result of reducing working days lost due to workplace injury and;
- Benefits to society worth between £45m - £207m as a result of reducing work related illness
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Although the GMB are not directly effected by these changes we engage with all employers that we have recognition with to support the benefits that trade unions reps bring. We encourage employers to allow GMB reps to take structured time off to fulfil their duties in a way that does not result in difficulties managing the work of those employees. For a line manager it is incredibly disruptive to have to allow a union rep time off on an 'as and when basis', it does not give any assurances to the manager that any work allocated to the union rep will be completed.

The GMB recommends that the Council considers postponing such a change given the huge upheaval its move to becoming a mainly commissioning authority is causing and it is not taking into account the support that union members will need during these times of uncertainty.

The Council rightly notes in its report that the move to Academy status for its schools is a driver in these changes. However instead of a move to reducing facility time across the board we recommend that the Council sets up a working party to facilitate how the unions can work with the individual Academy employers to pool facility time and to make sure that Schools themselves are taking this responsibility on. This works well in other boroughs and is a model we'd like to see set up in Bromley, with the Council playing the role as facilitator.

It would also be useful, if these proposals are implemented, for a pool of hours to be set up for the Unions to use to allow for proper planning of meetings, the attendance of these meetings and informing its members of the outcomes. We therefore suggest this is added to the remit of the working party we recommend is established.

To conclude, we are disappointed with these proposals and believe they are badly timed given the amount of change taking place. We would however like the Councillors to give serious considerations to our proposals and would welcome their introduction.

Kind regards  
Nick

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