



PRESS RELEASE

UNION ATTACKS COPELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT

Cumbria's biggest general trade union today bitterly attacked the Coalition Government over its national announcements made by the Secretary of State Eric Pickles on 13 December 2010.

The GMB said today that Copeland Borough Council's budget has been cut by 28% over the next four years with savings of £13.6 million broken down as follows: 2011/2012 £2m; 2012/2013 £3.5m; 2013/2014 £3.7m; 2014/2015 £4.4m.

GMB Regional Organiser for Copeland Borough Council Kevin Young said:

"The Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government have announced major public spending cuts that could have a major effect on local councils. Make no mistake; the impact of public spending cuts in Copeland could be devastating for hard working council staff, their families and indeed the wider public across the Borough.

As far as the GMB Union in the Northern Region is concerned the cuts that the Tory/Lib Dem Coalition Government have announced nationally, are avoidable. We believe that making those high earners in the UK who avoid their tax responsibilities, pay the right amount of tax, could save the country a fortune. We also believe that public services are good and that local council services should be delivered by council staff, not somebody else.

The GMB policy is opposed to these cuts that have been announced nationally and that are being imposed on local councils. We are also opposed to all outsourcing to private companies".

Mr. Young said that the GMB is part of a regional and national campaign to oppose the Coalition Government's public spending cuts. He said:

"We believe that for every one job that is lost in the public sector will lead to at least another job being lost in the private sector and these figures are backed up by highly reliable research, which is no less than the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development".

The GMB believe that Copeland Borough Council's net budget for 2010/2011 was £15m. There are currently 20-22 vacancies at Copeland Borough Council (CBC), these will not be filled; CBC is also looking for a further head count reduction of up to 20 by April 2011. These may come out of Corporate Support Services (Accountancy, Procurement, Leisure & Environment, HR, Legal & Democratic and Performance Improvement).

CBC has given a commitment to exploring all options before entering into compulsory redundancies.

Mr. Young said:

"It seems to us that this is one of the worst budget cuts in the country. Across the country, the public spending cuts that the Coalition Government is imposing, equates to about 28%. In addition the Coalition Government have announced pay freezes, a rise in retirement age and are consulting on local government workers paying more into the local government pension scheme. No prizes for guessing where this Tory/Lib Dem Coalition Government stands in relation to local government workers and their families. This Coalition Government is not on the side of public sector workers or their families and the announcement could not have come at a worse time".

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