



PRESS RELEASE

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UNION ATTACKS PROPOSED COUNCIL PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS

The North East's biggest general Trade Union has hit out at a Tyneside Council that is proposing to radically alter how it delivers services.

North Tyneside Council Mayor Linda Arkley has set in train a set of proposals that could see services as diverse as for example: revenues and benefits; health and safety; contact centres; highways services; environmental health; cleaning; security; caretaking; sports centres; parks; allotments; libraries; tourism, all being considered for partnership arrangements and/or different models of service delivery.

Under the banner of Business; Technical; Community Based Trust, the Council has appointed top Council Officers to invite prospective partners to talk to the Council about future delivery of a huge range of services.

The GMB Union has today challenged the Council to demonstrate evidence that any of these arrangements will provide better value for money for those who live, work and trade in the Borough.

GMB Northern Regional Organiser Mark Wilson said:

"This proposal by the Mayor comes straight out of the Tory and Taxpayers' Alliance bible of how to deliver local services that are paid for by the taxpayer. At a time when budgets are being slashed by this Tory Coalition Government, Mrs Arkley is in effect saying that companies, who might well have their HQ outside of the North Tyneside and therefore have little or no interest in the local economy, may well be providing services to the local taxpayer.

The GMB said that the Council has consistently failed to show that outsourcing and privatisation has benefited the local community citing the problems with Keir, the Council's Housing Maintenance Provider.

Mr Wilson said:

"The record consistently shows that outsourcing fails in the longer run to provide value for money. Only those top earners or Directors of Companies with no affinity to local areas benefit and the taxpayer consistently gets a very shoddy deal. There is absolutely no evidence that these proposals that North Tyneside are coming up with will give better service outcomes to the local taxpayer. What it will do is depress income levels at the very time when the local economy needs support. These proposals are a cover for massive cuts in spending; they are politically motivated and should be scrapped. The way to provide excellent value for money is to look seriously at how services are delivered, have good managers who can manage and not use political dogma as a basis of delivering vital local services".

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