



PRESS RELEASE

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Trade Union Unrest Regarding Devolution

The North East's biggest general union has today expressed its extreme concern regarding the direction of travel with the Devolution Deals on offer from the Government.

The GMB Union in the Northern Region claimed that its members were extremely wary of the way in which devolution in this Region was being portrayed. The GMB Union said that there is a perfect storm developing on this matter.

Chris Jukes GMB Senior Organiser said:

"We know that in other parts of the Region there is great scepticism at the way Government through the unelected Lord O'Neill is bullying Local Authorities. However in the North East Devolution Deal the offer is £30 million for 30 years when in reality up to 2020 those Councils covered by that Deal are having to cut hundreds of millions in revenue budget. This Deal is a pig in a poke. Workers being made redundant don't see George Osborne as the big bad wolf they see Labour Councils implementing Tory austerity".

In addition the GMB said that the way some Senior Council Officials were aggressively implementing the Tory Trade Union Bill showed the intent and direction of travel with cosying up to George Osborne on Devolution in the North East.

Mr Jukes said:

"Not content with cutting trade union facility time, some Directors of HR seem to be rubbing their hands with glee at the prospect of the Trade Union Bill becoming Law. They seem to be hiding behind every excuse under the sun and some of the Leaders they advise are running for cover and washing their hands saying not me gov. We need to be absolutely clear we will adapt to new conditions as we always have done but the workers we represent who provide vital services will be completely forgiven for having a very long memory with those Councils who are hostile to workers expressing their human rights. You can either talk the talk and express support for Trade Unions like the GMB in their stance on the Trade Union Bill or you can walk the walk and demonstrate you believe in Trade Unions as genuine stakeholders and that includes ways of offsetting this pernicious legislation due to become Law soon".

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