

Notts UNISON Press Release re Industrial Action Ballot and Job Cuts

We have today issued a press release with regards to further announcements from the Council re compulsory redundancies.....

UNISON strike ballot opens as Nottinghamshire County Council announces 1,000 compulsory redundancies: "job cuts will rock fragile Nottinghamshire economy" says union leader

UNISON has today (Thurs 27 Jan) called a decision by Tory-led Nottinghamshire County Council to press ahead with plans to cut vital services and sack 1,000 staff this year a disgrace and a betrayal to loyal workers and Nottinghamshire voters. The council had previously asked all staff to consider applying for voluntary redundancy or early retirement. But a briefing paper from the Council this week confirmed that just 400 of the 1700 staff who expressed an interest will be allowed to go, and that a further 1,000 compulsory redundancies are "likely to be needed" in the next year alone – with the union fearing further job cuts over the next two years.

Union members have called for a formal strike ballot over the council cuts plans, and voting starts today. UNISON is initially balloting its 3,600 members directly employed by the Council (the ballot excludes members employed in schools) as part of its campaign against services and job cuts, and the prospect of council services being privatised.

Martin Sleath, Secretary of the union's 'Nottinghamshire UNISON' branch reacted with anger at the jobs news:

"UNISON fears about Nottinghamshire communities being blighted by service cuts is sadly coming true. The council under-spent by £10 million last year, and have under-spent this year. The council has £159 million in cash reserves, and the Government says councils should use these to protect vital services and jobs. But this council will not. These cuts are a political decision not an economic necessity. Low-paid workers will pay with their jobs as services are axed or sold off to the private sector. These compulsory job cuts, with further promised next year, will rock the fragile Nottinghamshire economy and hit the vulnerable most. They must be halted."

The union has previously called on Kay Cutts, Conservative Leader of the Council, to work with them to explore alternatives, but the council refuses to respond to its direct request.

The union is also planning a major public demo at County Hall against the cuts on Thursday 24 February when councillors meet to agree budgets. Updates on the UNISON demo will appear at **www.nottsunison.org.uk**

The UNISON ballot for strike action opens 27 January and closes on 15 February. If members back strike action, this is likely to take place on Thursday 24 February to coincide with the demo.

Make sure you get your ballot paper and make sure you vote Yes to help save local jobs and services