

# Council passes emergency motion opposing UK Trade Union Bill



An emergency motion lodged at yesterday's council meeting resulted in urgent debate by all 58 councillors. The motion concerned the Trade Union Bill which is currently passing through the UK Parliament. MPs debated the second reading of this bill in the House of Commons on Monday of this week.

The Council Leader introduced the motion by saying: "I think it is important that all Scottish local authorities make their voice known during the passage of this bill which may be relatively short. Changes may still be possible, and so it is crucial that we have this debate now. The bill was passed earlier in the week by a relatively small margin.

"No-one should be in any doubt about the intention behind this Tory bill – it is to undermine the rights and ability of working people to organise for better terms and conditions in the workplace. Politicians and members of the public should oppose this reprehensible bill.

"There is a lot of detail in it and I have highlighted only two of these in the motion lodged in my name today."

The text of the motion lodged by the council leader was as follows:



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*(The last line of the motion was deleted before it was passed.)*

The text of the bill and details of its parliamentary passage can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

The discussion was long and protracted and involved all parties across the chamber, but the motion was eventually passed and the council leader will now write to the UK Government to try and either stop or change the terms of the bill.

Specifically Councillor Burns will explain that the council opposes the bill and will not cooperate with any attacks on what is known as 'facility time' (paid time off for trade union activities) and check off (a way of collecting union dues from employees).

Following the council meeting on Thursday morning, Councillor Cameron Rose the leader of the Conservative Group explained to us why the Conservatives moved for 'no action' on the emergency motion, and why they resisted it so much.

Councillor Rose said: "Despite claiming it tries to avoid national political issues, the administration of Edinburgh Council has waded in to the Westminster debate on the bill to protect public from strikes and address some areas of union privilege.

"The measures were in the Government's manifesto, the Queen's speech and subject to consultation and the will of Parliament will be played out as the bill goes through various stages – so it was a shame the Council leader abused the emergency motion procedure.

“The bill is about two things.

“The first is protecting services, paid from public money, from strikes which are based on a limited number of employees in a strike ballot. After all, the public do not get a vote in whether or not their service will be delivered.

“The second is to bring transparency to the use of public funds. It is not clear, for example, why councils should collect union dues, including political contributions, in the era of direct debit.”