

## **ES1 Executive Council Statement: Balanced Energy Policy**

**Covering Motions 16, 17 and 18**

Unite is the largest trade union in the UK energy sector with members in every form of power generation and distribution. Given this unique position, the Executive Council recognises the importance of maintaining a diverse range of electricity generating facilities, to ensure energy security, and to ensure compliance with the requirements to reduce carbon emissions from power generation.

Unite has maintained, through its decision making bodies, a continued commitment to a balanced energy policy, and the Executive Council firmly believes that the nuclear power sector should not be viewed in isolation from the rest of the UK energy sector, or indeed from the wider economy. Rather nuclear power should be understood in a wider context and should be seen as an integral element of an overall balanced energy policy.

The Executive Council recognises the legitimate fears that exist in the wake of the Fukushima tragedy, and believes firmly that the health and safety of workers and the general population must always be the paramount concern. However, the Executive Council also recognises the massive potential for economic growth that a commitment to a nuclear new build programme represents, and the fact that a large amount of current generating capacity will be closed in the medium term as a result of carbon emissions legislation.

Taking these developments into account, and in accordance with current policy, Unite has actively campaigned and lobbied for the deployment of new generating capacity from a range of sources. Such campaigning has to date supported the nuclear new build programme, but it does so on the basis of demanding full union recognition and organisation at the new sites. Organised workplaces are safer workplaces, and there can be nowhere where it is more important to recognise and act on this than in the nuclear energy sector.

At the same time Unite have been the most active trade union in terms of championing the UK renewable energy sector, including biomass, and has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the trade body Renewable UK with a view to jointly campaign for the mass deployment of renewable energy generating facilities across the UK. Unite has also supported the early deployment of carbon capture & storage technology (CCS), which will extend the lifespan of existing fossil fuel power stations by significantly reducing carbon emissions.

The indisputable reality remains however, that renewable energy sources are not yet sufficiently developed to fill the gap that will be left by the closure of existing nuclear capacity. The Executive Council therefore believes that the course of action taken thus far in pursuit of a balanced energy policy, including support for the nuclear new build programme, is not only the most socially responsible approach, but is also one that will contribute to meeting the UK's energy needs while deriving the maximum benefits for current and future workers in the sector.

## **ES2 Executive Council Statement: Peace and Disarmament**

Covering Motion 55 plus 2 amendments

This is the statement carried by Conference in 2010 that Conference is invited to reaffirm in 2012.

The trade union movement has always been in the forefront of the struggle for peace and international disarmament. Unite is proud to stand in that tradition. Our vision is of a world where wealth and labour are devoted to exclusively peaceful purposes, and where war is superseded by the control of disputes through international law and the United Nations.

This progressive outlook is more relevant than ever when Britain faces an acute budget crisis and public spending cuts are high on the political agenda of the new Tory-Liberal coalition government. The moral and internationalist case for peace and disarmament is reinforced by economic necessities. It cannot be right to spend large sums on weapons of mass destruction when essential services are facing cuts.

This makes the question of diversifying British manufacturing industry away from its over-reliance on defence spending urgent. We recognise that many thousands of Unite members rely on the civil and naval nuclear programmes for their jobs and for retention and development of skill across many sectors. These include shipbuilding, aerospace, transport, mechanical and electrical design, project management and IT, as well as many more in the supporting supply chains. Furthermore the successful renaissance of the civil nuclear industry depends heavily on the retention and development of the skills of these Unite members.

We will therefore press the new government to ensure that Britain's legitimate defence equipment needs are met from domestic producers and that proper forward planning of the defence budget is used to protect jobs and to promote the smooth transition of manufacturing to non-military production wherever possible.

The question of Britain's nuclear weapons system is not about employment alone, however. It is first of all a moral issue, and then a strategic one concerning Britain's place in the world and the international environment we wish to see. Such weapons would, if used, constitute a mortal threat to humanity's survival; they are massively expensive; senior military figures have described them as 'militarily useless' and said that they should be scrapped; and our possession of them encourages other countries to seek a similar arsenal while undermining the efforts being made by President Obama to advance the cause of international nuclear disarmament.

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**As a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Britain should therefore give a lead in discharging its obligations by not seeking a replacement for Trident and abandoning plans to spend an estimated £76 billion on a new generation of nuclear weapons. We need a policy that would see the jobs and skills of Unite members preserved, and until we receive firm commitments to this end we will continue to support our members and their employment.**

**Money saved by ending our nuclear weapons system could be used to sustain the process of defence diversification, vital to our manufacturing future, as well as freeing resources for investment in other socially-useful forms of public spending.**

## **ES3 Executive Council Statement: Political**

**Covering Motions 81 – 92**

**Conference welcomes the unanimous adoption by the Unite Executive Committee of a new Unite Political Strategy.**

**The purpose is clear:**

- Winning Labour for working people**
- Winning working people for Labour**
- Building a broad alliance to defeat the Tories and their policies**
- Winning a Labour government which will govern in the interests of working people and towards a socialism for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

For years Unite, and others, have talked of “reclaiming Labour” for the values of working people and the policies which advance their interests. The record of the last Labour Government was, for the most part, a bitter disappointment for all those who had such high hopes in 1997. From the uncritical embrace of the City, privatisation and the Iraq War, to the disdainful treatment of trade unions, the negatives outweighed the positives for many. And trade union and working class candidates became an endangered species leading to a huge change in the social and political make-up of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

**But for all the talk of “Reclaiming” little progress or serious and planned efforts were made. Consequently great frustration and distance emerged amongst our members and activists, especially with the continuing financial support from the union with little, apparently, in return. It is time for change.**

The times are now favourable for a renewed effort to reconnect Labour with our members and the working class generally. The crash of 2008 highlighted the failure of Neo-liberalism. The May election results and polling evidence shows the Coalition honeymoon is over – austerity policies are under challenge in the UK and Europe. In Ed Miliband Labour has a leader anxious to move beyond neo-liberalism and “New Labour” and embrace a new and more radical approach. He recognises that Labour cannot win again without addressing the loss of four million working class voters between 1997 and 2010, including seeking out a new generation of working class candidates.

The austerity agenda is also pushing millions of people to look at politics in a new way – direct action as with the Occupy movement and UK Uncut, the March 26<sup>th</sup> demonstration last year, widespread public sector industrial action, Europe wide actions and indeed the 70,000 who have joined Labour since the election all point to an increased engagement in politics.

On the other hand, right wing forces hostile to our agenda remain strong in the Labour Party, especially within the Parliamentary Labour Party and groups like Progress. We continue to be

exasperated from time to time by leadership statements influenced by right wing pressures. The union is to be commended for its measured but robust criticism, for example, around the speech on public sector pay in January. Unite must stand its ground and argue within the party for our positions.

The battle for Labour future direction is undecided – Unite must play the fullest part possible in the struggle for Labour’s soul. A time when we are making more progress than for many years, when we can win our party back, is a moment for perseverance and struggle. We resolutely reject the argument of right-wing Labour and Tories that unions should disaffiliate from Labour. It’s our party, we created it and we will continue to fight for it.

Our Political strategy involves reinvigorating our work at all levels.

#### **Battle of Ideas – winning policies**

We will pay far more attention to the battle of ideas in society, in politics and in the union. We have initiated with other unions, MPs and academics a new Think Tank – ClaSS – the Centre for Labour and Social Studies, which can develop and popularise the new ideas needed to shape a renewed socialist agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Already launched it is beginning to build up a public profile.

We are working hard to win progressive policies in the Labour Party policy review. We are coordinating our work better on the NEC and with TULO, including to ensure that the policy forum and Conference become far more democratic.

#### **Winning Labour – strategy and membership**

For twenty years, many Unite activists and members have slowly drifted from party involvement. Now we seek to secure a dramatic reengagement through an organised and planned strategy.

Our immediate aim is to win 5,000 Unite members to join the Party and become active and to increase the number of Unite delegates to CLPs significantly. If Labour is to reconnect with working class voters – what better way for Unite to assist! Conference urges Unite industrial activists to step forward to assume their political responsibility. Conference further urges support for the pilot campaigns in every Region which seek to use familiar organising methods to build membership, and calls for the regional leadership and industrial networks to support these campaigns.

#### **Political Organisation**

CLP activity and involvement by Unite will be audited and monitored by our Regional Political Committees and Regional Political Officers, who now have some dedicated political time. Annual Regional conferences of CLP delegates, and of Unite members in CLPs, development of our new and successful Councillors’ Network, links to the new Community Branches will all assist our coordination.

Following the pilot campaigns, Regions and Nations will be asked to prepare their own Strategic Political Development Plans - ambitious yet realistic – which will be closely monitored for delivery.

#### **Candidate Development and Selection**

We aim to end the discrimination against working class candidates for office. Existing work to encourage BAME, Women, LGBT and disabled candidates must be extended. Unite will launch its own Candidate Development Programme, (with links to the Labour Party Future Candidates' Programme), including regional training courses, individual mentoring and national initiatives like the Durham national school. We aim to persuade dozens of industrial and workplace activists that they have the ability, potential and responsibility to take up the challenge and run for public office, including Parliament.

We will continue to actively assist candidates seeking selection.

#### **Political Fund Ballot**

Unite must hold a ballot within the next 11 months to retain a Political Fund. This is not about Labour Party affiliation but about ensuring that Union members can have a voice – without a political fund it can be illegal to campaign against government policies. We continue to spend considerable sums on vital campaigns for trade union freedom and for the NHS and plan to spend more. We anticipate a strong Tory campaign to disrupt our campaigns – they are desperate to eliminate our political voice, and our political affiliations.

Conference, therefore, calls for the widest possible well-resourced campaign to win the Political Fund Ballot, to involve members of all political persuasions, and for our members to vote resoundingly in favour.

#### **Party Funding**

Concerns over corporate donations to political parties have been turned into an attack on Trade Union financial support for the Labour Party even though we are an affiliate rather than a donor. We defend our affiliation and our right to spend our funds raised from a million levy payers as we determine. We reject this Tory attack.

We are determined to use our funds in an open and transparent manner, to pursue our union's political objectives and with prudence. We understand membership concerns that money is carefully spent. Any donations will be scrutinised by the EC.

Our full Political Fund accounts and donations are freely available on the internet. Constituency Development Plans will be considered following recommendations from the Regional Political Committees in line with our political strategy.

#### **Conclusion**

Unite's Political strategy is a serious attempt to bring about political change, to reconnect with working class voters, to win back the Labour Party for trade union values. In the face of a

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**vicious Tory government imposing austerity to make working people pay the price of the bankers' crisis, the need for our Labour Party has never been greater.**

**Unite will work relentlessly to ensure the Labour Party is best capable of sweeping out the Tories so that we win a Labour Government which, this time, will govern in the interests of working people.**

## **ES4 Executive Council Statement: Severance Payments**

Covering motions 158-60

The Executive Council is aware that considerable concern has been expressed throughout the union and more widely over the severance payment made to former Joint General Secretary Derek Simpson upon his retirement from the union in December 2010. The Council fully shares those concerns, and reaffirms that neither the Council nor the General Secretary were aware of this payment, nor of the agreement under the terms of which it was made, until well after the event. The circumstances of this inappropriate payment represent a failure in the proper governance of the union which must not and will not be repeated.

To that end, Conference instructs the Executive Council to ensure that severance provision is standard, transparent and applicable to all employees of the union on the same basis, up to and including the General Secretary. Any decision on offering an employee severance should be based solely on the on-going management requirements of the union. The following principles should additionally be applied:

- 3 The standard severance terms negotiated with employee representatives at any time shall be the only ones applicable. If in the judgement of the General Secretary an additional payment may be expedient in a particular case, the prior approval of the Chair and vice-Chair of the Executive Council shall be secured.
- 3 Severance terms shall not be offered when that would represent a larger sum than an employee would earn by working until their normal retirement age.
- 3 Severance payments shall be monitored by the Executive Council and the F&GP on the same basis as other significant items of expenditure.
- 3 No senior officer who has left the union with a severance package shall be re-employed on a consultative or freelance basis within twelve months of their leaving the employment of Unite, without the approval of the Executive Council.
- 3 All compromise agreements signed with senior officers of the union should explicitly limit their ability to work for any company with which Unite has recognition for a period of time after their leaving the union.

If for any reason it is the opinion of the General Secretary that any of these principles should be varied in a specific case, this should be drawn to the attention of the Executive Council.

## **ES5 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT: TRANSPORT**

Transport is vital to our life in Britain and Ireland. It is a public service, an economic driver, essential to work, family life, independence, access, opportunity, and to thriving communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Just as transport links up our country and our world, so Unite transport workers keep everything and everyone on the move - from port to distribution warehouse to supermarket, bus stop to workplace, hospital to nursery, school to sport stadium, oil refinery to petrol forecourt and bus garage, train manufacturer to ferry terminal to taxi rank to High Street bank to canal bank, hotel to train station to airport to plane across the world.

**As the union for men and women transport workers, Unite is uniquely placed to identify a Strategy for Transport that is sustainable and will keep people, communities and the economy moving.**

Transport policy is currently dominated by the impact of global economic pressure and public sector cuts, by the legacy of privatisation and deregulation, and by the "race to the bottom" in the use of contracting, sub-contracting and outsourcing, agency working, and bogus self-employment. Profit-led cost-cutting, undercutting and insecurity is eroding safety, training and standards with downward pressure on pay, pensions and decent working practices.

Unite members in transport are standing up against injustice and for recognition of the importance of transport and transport workers : last year the fight for the UK's last rail manufacturer, the struggle for justice in British Airways and this year in Liverpool Docks, the London bus workers Olympics campaign and the national tanker driver dispute for minimum standards. Unite is also organising among unorganised transport workers in grocery retail logistics, low cost airlines, developing port combines, and tackling the divisions that separate drivers and warehouse, core workforce and agency, temporary workers, migrant workers, and part-time workers.

**This Executive Statement on Transport recognises the need for a positive integrated, sustainable Strategy for Transport, a strategy that puts transport back at the centre of public policy, a strategy that recognises transport policy is too important to all our futures to be left to the insecurity and instability of the market, and a strategy that recognises and supports transport workers as trained professionals, represented by Unite as the union for transport workers.**

**Conference therefore calls for :**

**COORDINATED ACTION AT ALL LEVELS TO SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN UNITE AS THE UNION FOR TRANSPORT WORKERS, including a Unite Transport Workers Charter involving each transport industrial sector, regional, national and international priorities, and A Unite Transport Strategy recognising that transport is an investment in the country's economic future, and**

including specific regional and devolved nations' strategies, the case for integrated transport, and for sustainable transport.

**A STRONG BARGAINING AGENDA FOR TRANSPORT WORKERS including :**

- Stopping the Race to the Bottom on employment standards throughout the transport sectors : protecting what has been achieved and establishing minimum standards
- Health and Safety : for example challenging abuses of the Working Time Directive in the road haulage industry; Truck stops campaign; access to toilet facilities; union safety reps
- Skills and Training : for example accredited 'Passport' of training achievements required, union learning reps
- Employment Standards : for example challenging the abuse of the Agency Workers Directive through the Swedish derogation; employer tactics to avoid TUPE protections; decent pay and pensions
- Trade union rights and facilities : for example effective paid release for union representatives; ensuring Unite membership is defended against derecognition or inter-union challenge
- Grievance and Disciplinary procedures : for example ensuring fairness and consistency, protection of shop stewards from victimisation
- Equalities : for example a negotiators' checklist for women transport workers; dyslexia and disability equality at work; tackling lack of progression for black workers in transport; equality for LGBT and young transport workers; union equality reps

**ORGANISING TRANSPORT WORKERS**

Ensuring our existing transport members are supported to build strong workplace and branch organisation, to further develop combines and to extend membership to unorganised men and women transport workers is essential. This needs to include cross-cutting areas such as Drivers, Freight, Distribution, Logistics, Engineering, and Call Centres, as well as by industrial sector. Recognising that there is a proud transport trade union history in our union of organising workers in other sectors, it is also important that through organising transport workers we are extending trade unionism outside transport as well.

**INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' ORGANISATION**

International organisation of transport workers must be central to Unite's strategy for transport. Companies across all transport sectors are transnational operators, there is cross ownership, development of links across country borders, rail and air links are internationalised, with the accompanying threat to sourcing of work from other countries, the evolution of new models of sub-contracting and outsourcing, and cabotage threatens the viability of road transport operations. Additionally, international and European standards govern much of the transport industry, for example current attempts in Europe to make anything not registered on the digital tachograph considered as a rest or break.

Unite reaffirms its support for international solidarity and organising globally within the ITF (International Transport Workers Federation) and the ETF (European Transport Workers Federation).

**ACTION AGAINST CUTS TO TRANSPORT** - for example, campaigning against cuts to the bus service operators grant and the slashing of concessionary fares for young and old people which mean that the only way the bus operators can maintain their profit margins is to cut back on labour costs by deregistering less profitable routes in rural and suburban areas. If unchecked this will lead to massive redundancies amongst drivers in the Passenger transport section. The attack will probably come after the Olympic Games have been completed and the sector is gearing up for this eventuality. Unite reaffirms its support for campaigning as part of Save Our Buses.

**INCREASED FUNDING – for public transport and the whole transport infrastructure**

**PROMOTING PUBLIC OWNERSHIP AND CHALLENGING FURTHER TRANSPORT PRIVATISATION AND DEREGULATION** – Unite reaffirms its support for campaigning on public ownership of the railways with the TUC, other unions, and with e.g. Transport for Quality of Life and the Campaign for Better Transport. Further Unite continues to support municipalisation of our bus services, defence of the remaining municipal bus services, and as a first step will continue to campaign for re-regulation of the industry via Quality Contracts.

Additionally, Unite remains in opposition to the privatisation of Dover Port and support for it as a People's Port; and continues to campaign on the Law Commission's consultation on laws governing the taxi industry which includes the possibility of total deregulation, which if it is allowed to go ahead would decimate the hackney cab section by driving numerous self-employed drivers out of business.

**A FAIR AND EFFECTIVE TRANSPORT PROCUREMENT STRATEGY** - for example, following the experience of the award of the Thameslink contract and the major threat to Britain's last rail manufacturer at Bombardier in Derby, Unite has called for the specification to reflect the industrial strategy, to include the full cost of bids including the social impact, and to ensure that going forward contracts are constructed so that it is the ability to manufacture trains rather than credit-rating of the bidding company that is the deciding factor.

Unite reaffirms its support for the European procurement directives to reflect these priorities.

**SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT** – Unite reaffirms its commitment to sustainable transport and to building on the 2009 conference and publication on sustainable transport and transport workers, in line with the ITF and ETF sustainable transport policy in response to climate change.

### **UNITE EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR TRANSPORT**

Unite reaffirms the importance of encouraging union education, including specific education courses for transport shop stewards/representatives and activists, and specialist training support for Regional Officers responsible for Transport RISCs and with transport membership

Every person in the country knows the value of transport. But it is only through union organisation that every person knows the value of transport workers.

Since our last Policy Conference, Unite transport workers have shown that when they stand firm, the employers have moved, but the threats continue and the need for our union to keep standing up for decent standards in transport is vital.

Unite is the union for transport workers and now is the time to ensure they are recognised and valued for the vital and professional work they do.