

Statement: PS09.02

Cabinet – 18th March 2021

Re: Agenda item 9 – Delivery of Cleaning and Security Services

Statement submitted by: Tom Merchant, UNISON

This is a moral argument - that people are not assets to be passed off to third parties. This is an argument that strikes to the core of what good government is and how it carries along the people that work for it. This was not a planned "reform", no one stood on the hustings and said that they stood for taking the poorest of our staff and displacing them into a different company. This decision does not meet a public need or fulfil a public promise. It is an idea from people who are personally unaffected by such disasters as outsourcing.

Not one of us would be happy to be treated this way and the sight of people who cannot conceive of the conditions of our cleaning staff saying: well, as long as the process is followed correctly, so be it. Morally, it should be done only in emergencies such as the failure of a business or as a protection for staff working for contractors going from one long-term contract to another. Good employers do not transfer their staff to third parties, even the paternal ones insist on permanent status even if they can't bring themselves to care about other social issues.

We do the opposite, we seem to care about social issues enough to care about ethnicity, language and dignity but not to care about older certainties like being permanent members of the company you interviewed for. Status matters. I think you can't have dignity at work without commitment from your employer. We would not, ourselves, accept treatment such as this but we accept it for others without blinking.

I have written to the council about this issue for months now, practically ad nauseum, so I don't need to repeat myself entirely. But I would like to end with a simple list of some things that won't be protected, can't be protected or may well be changed under Tupe with this transfer.

Some of these are: no councillor appeals panel for an independent look, a different disciplinary policy, a different equality policy, a different grievance policy and appeals process, when promoted they may lose their t's and c's, a two tier system where new appointees will be on different pay as they work side by side, and less overall democratic scrutiny.

We ask that you do not go ahead with this.