

M7: REGIONAL PARTICIPATION REVIEW

Council notes it has been noticeable over some years that a number of the Regional Meetings including the Regional Council have not been quorate and therefore cannot carry out their business, make decisions, and take action which is a problem, with some motions not being heard for over a year. This is undemocratic and leads to activists not wanting to attend a meeting that does not achieve what it should in being the voice of public sector workers across the south east.

Council further notes that according to Public-sector trade union facility time data 2018/2019 there was a 6% cut across public sector employers in facility time spending from the previous year. Our branches in the region continually experience growing pressures to represent members due to privatisation, commissioning and the effects of austerity on our services at a time where our facilities to carrying out union work is being decimated. This has the knock on effect of our activists struggling to obtain release to attend the number of meetings across our regional democracy and presents a barrier to participation which can be seen in the amount of vacant seats on regional committees.

Council believes that due to the lack of participation by branches and low turnout at meetings that in many cases decisions are referred to other bodies therefore not allowing a diverse range of opinions being heard on issues affecting both our member and our branches.

Regional Council further believes that regional structures including service groups, strategic committees and standing committees are not fit for purpose and do not meet the challenges of the changing workforce and how public services are being delivered. If we are to support our current members, grow as a union and ensure we have an activist base to meet these challenges, we need vibrant and active regional structures that work for all members and activists and maintains UNISON as a member led union.

Regional Council resolves:

1. To carry out a review of the regional committee structures and to convene a working group to comprise of:
 - a) Regional Convenor
 - b) Regional Secretary
 - c) 2 members of the Regional Objectives Group
 - d) 1 representative from each service group
 - e) 1 representative from each self organised group
 - f) 1 young member
 - g) 1 retired member

2. The objective of the review will be to:

- a) To consult with all branches and self organised groups on barriers to regional democracy participation.
 - b) Review the current purpose, scope and remit of all bodies within the regional committee structure.
 - c) Develop a plan to increase participation and attendance in regional activities and decision making to the benefit of all our members.
 - d) Gather feedback from branches and self organised groups on any potential changes to the regional committee structure.
3. That the working group present recommendations and potential constitutional changes, including rules changes and or a new Regional Constitution to the Regional Council AGM 2021.