

Union concern at plans to deregulate councils...

Unison the public service trade union which represents 1.4 million public service workers across the UK is campaigning against plans recently announced by Conservative minister for Local Government Eric Pickles to “deregulate” local councils.

Bernadette Gallagher Bolton Unison Branch Secretary said “the legal responsibilities placed on local councils are not just bureaucracy and red tape as the coalition government claim. These council responsibilities are absolutely vital to public safety and welfare. It is outrageous that the current government should consider scrapping them”.

She added that “Currently councils are required to ensure that Taxis and Private Hire vehicles are properly licensed. Regulation of these services helps to protect not only the public but also reputable operators. Without these regulations how safe would it be to get into a taxi or private hire vehicle? Currently councils are required to offer grants to disabled people to help make properties accessible, without these regulations, many disabled people would be unable to live independently in the community, would this really be cost effective for public services? Currently councils have responsibilities to license premises, who would want a strip club next door if the council wasn’t there to restrict their operation? Councils are currently required to provide a public library service, what sort of future would our town have if the requirement to provide this service was removed all together?”

Martin McLoughlin, President of Bolton Trades Council added that “the current regulations may not be perfect and we can all argue that there is not enough money spent on our local libraries, gritting our icy roads in winter, maintaining public footpaths or tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. However, Eric Pickles and the con-dem government would be crazy to scrap the important regulations that councils are required to follow. Day in day out our local council and the council workforce use these regulations for the benefit of our town”.