



INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**The Documentary Record
introduced by Mike Somerton**

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Industrial Democracy in Local Government Service*

The TUC Report on Industrial Democracy in 1974 made brief reference to the need to extend Industrial Democracy in the Public Services, and subsequently NALGO, NUGMW, TGWU and the TUC Local Government Committee made statements of policy on this subject. Soon after the establishment of the Bullock Committee to enquire into industrial democracy in the private sector, the Government set up a number of parallel inquiries to look at the public sector, including local government. Since these inquiries are being conducted by inter-departmental committees of civil servants which to quote *Incomes Data Services* (Brief 91, August 1976) "in the nature of things . . . operate behind closed doors", and since their function is to provide briefs for the Government, it seems unlikely that there will be any officially published reports.

In February 1977, a statement of a joint working party of the Labour Party and the TUC Local Government Committee on Industrial Democracy in Local Government was published. The statement was endorsed by the Labour Party NEC and the TUC General Council. In the introduction to their proposals the working party stated:

"In its discussions the working party have had in mind that although, because of the elective principle and the representative nature of local government, there are special problems in the introduction of a system of industrial democracy into local government, nevertheless the case for bringing the view of the people working in this area to bear upon the formulation of policy is just as valid as in other areas of employment. The working party has therefore sought to devise machinery which will assist in bringing this about without in any way disturbing the wide democratic nature of local government."¹

They argued that industrial democracy should operate at all levels of a local authority and made four proposals in relation to achieving this aim.

1. The law should be changed to allow representatives of local authority workers to become non-voting members of council committees. These representatives should be elected by members of recognised trade unions working in the appropriate departments, or in the case of committees which cover more than one department, for example, Policy and Resources, by trade unionists in the whole local authority. These employees representatives should constitute no more than 20 per cent of each committee, but there should be a minimum of two. The existing position of voting rights for teachers who are co-opted on to Education committees should be maintained.

*We are grateful for permission to feature this excerpt from *Trade Unions and Industrial Relations in Local Government* available from WEA, 9 Upper Berkely Street, London W1 (45 pence).

2. The provisions for representation on governing bodies of schools and colleges should allow for employee representation. These representatives should be drawn from and elected by members of recognised trade unions representing teaching and non-teaching staff.
3. A formal system of Department Joint Committees should be set up for the discussion of general matters within the department. The size of these committees should be decided by local negotiation. Employee representatives should be drawn from and elected by trade unionists in the department concerned. The chief officer and chairman of the relevant council committee should attend Departmental Joint Committees.
4. Consideration needs to be given to devising means of enabling employees to participate at lower levels. Unions and employing authorities should discuss nationally how employees can play their part in jointly determining how the services in which they are directly involved are operated.

In addition a fifth proposal was made, which the working party regarded more as a matter of civic rights than industrial democracy. This proposal was that the law should be amended to allow council employees (with the exception of chief officers and their deputies), the right to stand for election to the council which employs them. At present council employees are disqualified by law, and all the working party was doing in making this proposal was to reaffirm long standing TUC and Labour Party policy on this issue.

The proposals summarised above are substantially the same as proposals formulated by the TUC Local Government Committee alone in 1975, and sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment in June of that year. However, they do differ in one important respect, in that the 1975 statement argued that trade union representatives on council committees *should have voting rights*, a proposal which was not adopted by the Joint TUC/Labour Party statement.

It is also the case that NALGO have expressed areas of disagreement with the TUC: in their 1977 document, *Industrial Democracy*, they contend:

"NALGO believes that the TUC's proposals will not provide for industrial democracy in local government comparable with that recommended for other industries and services.

The two most important areas of disagreement are as follows:

- i. the TUC's policy does not provide for representation on the full council;
- ii. it does not provide for the establishment of a common trade union viewpoint through the Workers' Council."²

On the first point NALGO think a minimum of four representatives appointed from the Workers' Council, should serve on the full council. They would have speaking, but not voting rights. The Workers' Council would be a body composed of representatives elected from all recognised trade unions. The 1974 policy statement on Industrial Democracy by the union's National Local Government Committee mentions that the election procedure for the Workers' Council "should be that of proportional representation of the recognised trade unions, in accordance with size of membership of the trade union branches at the individual local authority level."³ In addition to appointing representatives to the full council, this Workers' Council would nominate representatives on to the councils' operational or standing

committees. At this level, Workers' Council representatives would be entitled to vote. As for the TUC/Labour Party scheme, the number of these representatives would range from a minimum of two to a maximum of one fifth of the total membership of the council in question. NALGO also adopts the TUC line that participation must be closely identified with trade-union organisation, and that representation should be on the single channel basis, which should not be by-passed. They also think that worker representatives should be trade union employees of the authority concerned, and not full time officials or other non-authority employees.

NALGO's idea of a Workers' Council is interesting in that it bears some resemblance to the Joint Representation Committee of Shop Stewards proposed by the Bullock Report. As a means of formulating common union policy at authority level the Workers' Council might be very useful. There might however be some discussion amongst local government trade unionists as to whether such a body should nominate its members to full council and committees, or whether these representatives should be directly elected by workers in the whole authority or department concerned.

The TUC/Labour Party statement suggests the formation of joint committees at departmental level, but is a little vague as to their composition and functions. In contrast, a TGWU statement on Industrial Democracy in Local Government issued by the union in 1976, envisages that departments "should in future be run by a joint union-management board. This board would be composed of trade union representatives elected from among the trade unions in each department and they would take exactly half of the places on the management board. The other half of the places would be for the present 'director' or 'controller' and other such senior staff as the council who wish to nominate. Thus on the day-to-day organisation of work there would be joint determination, whilst still leaving the function of overall policy making to the Council. Matters which are at present subject to managerial prerogative (with or without consultation), would then be brought within the sphere of joint determination. This in itself will be a major step forward."

In December, 1976, the Association of County Councils, the Association of District Councils, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, the Greater London Council and London Boroughs Association produced a joint employers' statement on Industrial Democracy. This had followed a request to the employers' associations, by the Government, to initiate an enquiry into the question of industrial democracy. A survey of member authorities was undertaken which revealed "that there is already a great deal of formal and informal consultation between elected members and employees and that most, if not all, authorities have established machinery for the joint consideration of matters of legitimate staff interest". The statement contained two basic points of principle which are set out in full below:

"The Associations are agreed on two basic points of principle as follows:

- a. Because local authorities are democratically elected bodies they are different from private industry and therefore employee participation in local government service must be on a different basis from that which may be possible in the private sector. The basic principle of democratic election means that, in the view of the Associations, there could be no question of employees serving as members of the full council or any committees of local authorities.
- b. On matters affecting pay and conditions of service there is a long history of consultation

and negotiations within local government, and all authorities, both individually and collectively, have established with their staff appropriate machinery for negotiation of matters of this nature. In so far as there is scope for a greater degree of consultation with the staff on broad policy issues which affect the interests of staff, it is a matter for each individual local authority to decide in consultation with the staff what further arrangements are appropriate."⁴

The first of these principles of course conflicts with even the modest TUC/Labour Party proposal for non-voting trade union membership of committees. The firmness of the employers' views on this point can be judged by the text of a press release issued by the Association of County Councils on 13th April, 1977, which explained "that there can be no question of employees serving as members of a county council or any of its committees, either in a voting or non-voting capacity." The debate on Industrial Democracy in Local Government is a continuing one and there are those who would argue for a more radical approach to the problem than is offered by the proposals put forward by the TUC. How far Local Government is likely to experience an extension of industrial democracy is in any event inextricably bound up with the success the unions have in building up shop steward systems.

Mike Somerton

FOOTNOTES

1. *Industrial Democracy in Local Government*, Joint Statement by the Labour Party and the TUC, 1977, page 1.
2. *Industrial Democracy*, NALGO, 1977, page 8.
3. *Industrial Democracy*, NALGO, Annex A, page 26.
4. *Joint Statement on Industrial Democracy*, Association of County Councils, Association of Metropolitan Authorities, Greater London Council, Association of District Councils, London Boroughs' Associations, 16 December, 1976.

Labour Party and TUC Proposals*

Wide ranging proposals designed to extend industrial democracy in local government have been drawn up by a joint working party of the TUC and Labour Party.

The working party's statement, which covers issues such as employee representation on council committees and school governing bodies, as well as participation in the running of council departments, was endorsed today by the TUC General Council and the Labour Party NEC.

The main proposal is that employee representatives should form up to 20 per cent of each council committee. Such representatives would not have voting rights: their function would be to bring the special knowledge of local authority employee to bear on committee decisions.

On schools and college governing bodies employee representatives should include both teaching and non-teaching staff and should have voting rights.

At departmental level the working party suggest a formal system of committees which would involve staff at all levels in the management of their departments and which would be attended by the chairman of the relevant committee of the local authority and the chief officer.

The statement recommends that consideration should be given as to how, below departmental level, employees can best play their part in jointly determining how the services in which they are directly involved operate.

The working party re-affirm the TUC and Labour Party policy that local government employees (except chief officers) should no longer be barred from standing for election to the council which employs them, and a joint meeting about this is being sought with the Environment Secretary.

The working party which was chaired by Mr Geoffrey Drain consisted of the following:-

Representing the TUC	—	Mr M Martin, Mr J May, Mr F Shrosbree, Mr M Morris, Mr C Donnett and Mr D Riddell
Representing the Labour Party	—	Ms Joan Maynard MP, Mr Allaun MP, Mr J Cartwright MP, Mr R Brown MP, Mr J Smart and Mr J Potter

The full text of the statement is set out below:

Following the decision by the Government early in 1976 to initiate a series of

*"Industrial Democracy in Local Government: Joint Statement by the Labour Party and the TUC", February 1977.

studies into the scope for extending industrial democracy throughout the public services, the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and the Local Government Committee of the Trades Union Congress decided to set up a joint working party to look into this issue as it affects local government.

In its discussions the working party have had in mind that although, because of the elective principle and the representative nature of local government, there are special problems in the introduction of a system of industrial democracy into local government, nevertheless the case for bringing the views of the people working in this area to bear upon the formulation of policy is just as valid in principle as in other areas of employment. The working party has therefore sought to devise machinery which will assist in bringing this about without in any way disturbing the wider democratic nature of local government.

The working party has also been clear that, because the aim of industrial democracy is the achievement by employees of greater control over their work situation, industrial democracy must operate at all levels of a local authority. The proposals set out below seek to achieve this aim and, at the same time, to improve local government's service to the community by making better use of employees' knowledge and experience to improve work performance and the quality of decision-making: the present structure of local authorities tends to inhibit the cross-fertilisation of ideas across departmental boundaries and administrative hierarchies.

Representation on Committees

Local authorities' policies are made and implemented by committees and sub-committees, and one especially important function of committees is to ensure that the working implications of proposals have been thoroughly assessed. It is in this area that employee participation could be of particular value, and it is therefore proposed that the law should be changed to enable representatives of local authority employees to become non-voting members of council committees. However, the existing position of teachers co-opted with voting rights on to Education Committees should be maintained.

Such employee representatives could be drawn from the staff sides of the various local joint consultative committees. Where council committees only cover one department (for example, education committees), employee representatives should be drawn from and elected by members of recognised trade unions employed in that department, but employees should also be represented on other committees such as policy and resources which cover more than one department. Such representatives should be elected by trade unionists in the whole local authority. As far as numbers are concerned, employee representatives should constitute no more than 20 per cent of each committee, but there should be a minimum of two representatives. It is not proposed that employee representatives should have voting rights; their role would be to bring the special knowledge of local authority employees as a whole to bear upon committee decisions.

Representation on Governing Bodies

Similarly, there should be provision for employees to be represented with voting

rights on lower level bodies such as the managing and governing bodies of schools, colleges, etc. Such employee representatives should be drawn from and elected by members of recognised trade unions representing the teaching and non-teaching staff of these bodies: indeed, both the TUC and the Labour Party have already proposed this to the Taylor Committee which is enquiring into the government and management of schools.

Participation at Departmental Level

In addition to participation in Committee work, it is important that industrial democracy should operate within council departments. A number of local authorities have already established committees which seek to involve all grades of staff within each department's activities. The extension generally of such committees could provide a formal mechanism for participation in management and provide a systematic, rather than an ad hoc, channel for the discussion of general matters (as distinct from terms and conditions of service between management and trade union representatives). It would therefore be possible for employees to be engaged in the discussion of matters which are of major importance to staff before a decision is taken at committee level; for example any proposed changes in work practice; changes in staffing levels; a switch of manpower resources, and indeed the general implementation of council policies affecting their departments. The school secretary, caretaker or welfare assistant, as well as the teacher, have a positive and valuable contribution to make to the working of the school or the education department. Similarly a rent collector could provide a wealth of information to a housing department. It may be argued that there is no guarantee that the views of employees will influence the final decision but, as the TUC stated in 1974, the views of employees are only "one of the elements which should enter into the formulation of policy".

Department committees along the lines proposed above would not require legislation, and their size should be determined by local negotiation. But it can be said that they should be attended by the chairman of the relevant committee of the authority and the chief officer. Employee representatives should be drawn from and elected by trade unionists employed in the department concerned.

Participation at lower levels

The foregoing proposals have tended to centre upon decision-making at the higher levels of local authorities, although what is decided there may of course have important implications much lower down. What most employees are concerned about, however, is how they can bring their views to bear upon decisions on details of working arrangements which are extremely important to them. At the moment they may only be able to express their views about relatively straightforward issues — for example, grading — which can be dealt with through local authorities' existing industrial relations machinery.

Consideration therefore needs to be given to devising means — which will not require legislation and which may be relatively informal — of enabling employees to play their part in jointly determining how the services in which they are directly involved are operated and there should be discussions between unions and employing

authorities nationally about this. This might not mean creating new machinery; it might be possible to adapt existing machinery or to use it for new purposes.

Removal of the Disqualification Bar

Finally, although it is really a question of civic rights rather than industrial democracy, both the Labour Party and the TUC wish to take this opportunity to reaffirm their long standing policy that the law should be amended to end the disqualification of local government employees (with the exception of chief officers and their deputies) from standing for election to the Council of the local authority which employs them. Both organisations strongly believe that legislation on these lines is very much overdue, and will be seeking a joint meeting with the Secretary of State for the Environment to secure unequivocal commitment from the Government.

What NALGO Thinks*

The principle of industrial democracy has been supported by NALGO for many years, affirms the National Executive Council's white paper on the subject which will be presented to this year's NALGO Conference.

It points out that as long ago as 1968 NALGO seconded a composite motion at the TUC which called for worker participation in management, including trade union representatives on management boards of nationalised industries and public authorities.

However, because of the differing nature of the various services and industries which NALGO covers, it has not since then adopted a rigid policy or fixed set of criteria on industrial democracy.

The report then sets out the latest developments in the industrial democracy field and the differing approaches of NALGO's national service conditions committees.

The Bullock Committee, set up by the Government to consider industrial democracy in the private sector, has pronounced in favour of an equal number of employee and shareholder representatives on management boards, with a small third group of co-opted directors who should be mutually agreed. Employee representatives would be selected by the trade unions recognised by the concern.

A Whitehall inter-departmental committee is considering industrial democracy in the nationalised industries, while workers' participation in central and local

"White Paper on Industrial Democracy": This article appeared in the April 1977 issue of NALGO's journal *Public Service* and is reproduced in full.

government is being considered separately.

In the meantime, a report by the National Economic Development Office has put forward the idea of a two-tier board system for nationalised industries — a policy board and a management board. The trade unions would have minority representation on the policy board on which the Government and consumers would also be represented.

Divided Opinions

The TUC General Council's report on industrial democracy, accepted by Congress in 1974, also favoured such a two-tier system but with equal representation for trade union and shareholder directors on the policy board.

However, the NALGO report points out, affiliated unions have always been divided on this issue and the doubts are, if anything, growing. Many unions feel that industrial democracy could better be achieved by extending and strengthening the collective bargaining process to cover a much wider area of what have been traditionally regarded as management matters.

This duality of approach has been reflected in a number of vague and contradictory Congress resolutions over the past few years.

The attitudes of NALGO's various services are similarly divided as is clear from their points of view as set out in the white paper.

Local Government. The national committee favours up to one fifth representation on council committees, with representatives having both a voice and a vote; trade union representation on bodies like school governors; representation on the full council although without a vote; committee and council representatives to be appointed by a workers' council representing all recognised unions.

NALGO has not been able to carry other TUC local government unions with it and the policy now adopted by a joint TUC/Labour Party working party is far milder (see pp.5-8). The main point of contention has been that industrial democracy in local government cuts across the principle of political democracy and the responsibility of the council to the electors.

Health. Long-term policy is that half the members of regional and area health authorities should be trade unionists drawn from all sections of the movement, including full-time officers. This is also TUC policy.

The Government has agreed that two members of each regional and area health authority should be drawn from staff organisations represented on health service Whitley councils, and NALGO has welcomed this "interim step."

Electricity. The national committee, following consultation with electricity members, is against sharing in management by way of worker directors. It favours the setting up of a national joint committee on which all unions and management would be represented and which would deal with a wide spread of matters like efficient operation of the industry, investment, tariffs, manpower forecasts, future planning, technological change including choice of generating plant and fuels. Such a committee has now been set up and discussions on a constitution are nearing completion.

Gas. In the long term, the gas staff trade unions, including NALGO, favour 50 per cent employee representation on policy boards at national and regional level. They do not favour consumer representation and have rejected the limited form of participation and powers recommended in the NEDO report.

The unions do not believe that such a 50/50 system should be introduced until a large majority of members favour it. Worker directors would be apportioned amongst unions on the basis of membership in the industry.

In the meantime, the unions want to broaden the scope of negotiation with the Gas Corporation to cover things like financial planning, pricing and marketing policy and man-power planning. And they want more powers and decision making de-centralised to the regions.

Water. Representatives of recognised unions on both the National Water Council and the regional water authorities are favoured "giving trade unions the opportunity to influence decision-making in all areas of policy" and providing "greater access to information concerning the industry, its policies and their effects upon staff interests."

Such representatives should serve for at least three years and be paid their normal salary during their term of office. They would need appropriate support and advisory services from their unions.

The national water services committee does not see such worker participation as a substitute for collective bargaining in water but rather as "a useful adjunct to the present negotiating machinery".

Transport. The extension of the scope of negotiating machinery, particularly at local level, in all transport services is preferred by the national transport committee and by transport members to trade union representation on policy-making boards.

Universities. The national universities committee, too, plumps for the extension of collective bargaining and "the right to be able to negotiate on all matters affecting members".

It considers that employees elected to the kind of policy board suggested by the TUC soon lost contact with their fellow employees and their aspirations. It has decided to make no recommendation to branches on the question of representation on university governing bodies but to advise them of the inherent dangers.

Both new towns and industrial estates want a strengthening of existing bargaining machinery "in order to widen its parameters" and greater disclosure of information to the staff sides. The staff side to the industrial estates Whitley council would also like the right to nominate a limited number of representatives to the boards of development agencies and the industrial estates corporations in order to be involved in decisions affecting the livelihood of members.

Back-up Services Needed

The conclusion to the white paper states that whatever forms of industrial democracy are adopted they will place great strain and responsibilities on the union members involved. They will need greater facilities to undertake their representative roles, and appropriate support, advisory services and training from their unions.

"A crucial question", states the report, "as system of industrial democracy develop, is to ensure that there is a means of accountability by which representatives of the membership can be answerable to those whom they represent with safeguards to ensure their recall if necessary."

It concludes that "joint regulation and control by NALGO members over all decisions which affect their working lives is a goal that can be attained through many methods, none of them mutually exclusive. It is this goal which NALGO sees as the true purpose of industrial democracy."

The Views of the TGWU

The TUC has outlined its proposals for seeking an extension of democracy in local government and submitted these to the Government in June 1975. The proposals of the TUC were followed up with representations to the Government, and recently on 5th July 1976 the TUC Local Government Committee had a meeting with the Minister for Local Government, Mr J. Silkin, MP.

At that meeting, at which the T&GWU was represented, the TUC Local Government Committee outlined its proposals for ensuring that there is a radical extension of industrial democracy in the public sector, in line with the Manifesto promise of the Government. This Union has a long standing commitment to achieving a radical advance in industrial democracy in both the private and public sectors and we would draw the Government's attention to the fact that local government authorities are a very large employer of labour. The labour force is well in excess of two million, a significant number of whom are represented by this Union, and we would not wish to see these workers treated as "second class industrial citizens".

1. *Civic Rights*

The first priority for the Government should be a reform of the Local Government Act 1972. The disqualification of local government employees under Section 80(1) of the Act, from standing for election to their employing authority should, with very few exceptions for the most senior officers, be repealed forthwith. Action needs to be taken fairly quickly on this matter.

2. *Representation on Council Committees*

On the further question of industrial democracy we recognise that this presents special problems because of the role of local authorities as representatives of the electorate. However, the workers in this sector cannot, and should not, be totally excluded from the decision-making process. We believe that workers in local government must be able to take part in the formulation of policy *and* in its execution. At present local authorities may advocate a policy which can produce redundancies, a dispersal of staff, changes in working practices for example, which radically affect the workforce.

We support the proposals of the TUC that there should be worker representation on council committees and sub-committees, with no less than two representatives, drawn and elected from the trade unionists in the council departments, but no more than a fifth of the committee.

At present the Local Government Act (Section 102) enables the Council to appoint to committees and sub-committees persons who are not members of the Council, provided at least two-thirds of its members are members of the Council.

However, Section 104 applies to the same disqualifications for membership of the Council itself. Thus a change in this section, as for Section 80(1), would be the first step towards allowing some councils to implement schemes along the lines of the TUC's proposals.

Councils should note that at present there is no legal obstacle to the Councils inviting worker representatives to attend and speak at committee meetings, provided they could not vote, and we urge that Councils should take action, in consultation with the trade unions concerned, on this now.

3. *Representation on the Full Council*

We would agree that there could be no question of trade union representatives sitting as voting members of the full council. The need to preserve the accountability of elected representatives requires this. In the last analysis the full council would need to preserve the right to over-rule the decisions of council sub-committees. But it would be hoped that such occasions would be rare.

However, we see no reason why two representatives drawn from trade union side of the council committees should not attend each council meeting, with speaking rights. They would have a dual purpose: to report back to their trade unions the views of the Council and to inform the Council of the views of its workforce.

4. *Extending Joint-determination at lower levels*

Our aim is *joint determination*, on all matters of personnel and related issues. At present local authorities have departments which look after the provision of municipal services, for example there will be departments that deal with the parks, libraries and other civil amenities, transport (in case of some authorities such as the GLC) direct labour, "establishments" or staff departments and supplies. These various departments at present are often in charge of a "Director" or "Controller" who is responsible to the relevant Council Committee or sub-committee for the efficient operation of the services.

We propose that these departments should in future be run by a joint union-management board. This board would be composed of trade union representatives elected from among the trade unions in each department and they would take exactly half of the places on the management board. The other half of the places would be for the present "director" or "controller" and other such senior staff as the council wish to nominate. Thus on the day-to-day organisation of work there would be joint determination, whilst still leaving the function of overall policy making to the Council. Matters which are at present subject to managerial prerogative (with or without consultation) would then be brought within the sphere of joint-determination. This in itself will be a major step forward.

The trade union side of the management board would then elect some of its number to sit on the relevant sub-committee or committee of the Council. Those elected onto these committees would then elect two representatives to attend full Council meetings.

5. *Conclusion*

We believe it is only right that the workers involved in local government (the vast majority of whom are trade unionists) should be given the opportunity, through the trade union machinery, to make a contribution to the evolution

and execution of policy. We would emphasise that this is not only right, but that it can hardly fail to lead to a better service to the public in that decision-making is extended to tap the abilities of the whole workforce, and to a better service to the elected councillors who will be more fully aware of the feelings of the workforce.

The Employers' View*

1. Introduction

Following their acceptance of the Government's request to initiate a study of this subject the three Associations decided to ask their member authorities to complete a short questionnaire regarding joint participation in decision-making and policy generally as distinct from the normal joint machinery for dealing with conditions of service matters, with a fuller questionnaire seeking more detailed information about the ways in which employees are taken into discussions on any subject from conditions of service to decision-making on the nature of the authority's service being sent to only a sample of the membership. Broadly speaking, the replies received by the individual associations from their constituent members reveal that the situation is much the same throughout all classes of authority and that there is already a great deal of formal and informal consultation between elected members and employees and that most, if not all, authorities have established machinery for the joint consideration of matters of legitimate staff interest.

2. Conditions of Service Matters

Authorities were asked what joint committees, sub-committees, etc. existed to discuss matters of staff interest, what representatives from what committees and trade unions represented the council and the employees respectively on these committees, the extent of or limits on matters which could be discussed and the frequency of meetings. The replies revealed that all local authorities have the equivalent of joint consultative committees for salaried staff and for manual workers and in the case of education authorities for education staff. Many larger authorities have one or more additional consultative committees and in some cases a number of departmental/sectional committees. Member/employee representation is usually on a 50/50 basis but the ACC mention that the majority of counties answering the detailed questionnaire indicated that in the case of education staff teachers had a substantial majority over the elected members, although they have no voting rights; this is the case in only one of the 12 education authorities in membership of the

**Industrial Democracy*: A Circular from the Association of County Councils, Association of District Councils, Association of Metropolitan Authorities, Greater London Council, London Borough's Association (December 1976).

AMA who completed the detailed questionnaire. No real pattern emerged regarding the frequency of meetings, committees meeting as and when required; the average seemed to be once a quarter, with education consultative committees probably meeting once a term. Discussion appeared to be limited, frequently constitutionally, to locally negotiable conditions of service and staffing matters.

3. Participation in Decision Making and Policy Generally

In connection with the inquiry about joint participation in decision-making and policy generally authorities were asked about the degree of co-optation on ordinary council committees and the extent of or limitation on employees' speaking or voting. They were asked about arrangements for joint discussion of these issues at elected member and at management level, the rights of representation to elected members and the scope and limitation on the matters that could be discussed. Among both ACC and AMA membership the 1944 Education Act's requirement that an education committee should include "persons of experience in education and persons acquainted with the education conditions prevailing in the area for which the committee sits" has in practice meant that teachers have been co-opted as members of education committees with full speaking and voting rights. In most cases at least three teachers (representing primary, secondary and further education) and possibly as many as six are co-opted to an average education committee of 20 to 50 members with proportionally the same representation on sub-committees. In the case of both the Associations, the co-opted teachers are in the vast majority of cases representatives of teachers unions. Education is the only area where full co-optation of employees is allowed.

4. Arrangements for Discussion at Management (non-Member) Level and with Members

There are often arrangements for employee representatives meeting the Chief Executive, Personnel Officer or Chief Officers individually or sometimes collectively as a management team and about half the authorities replying to the sample questionnaire indicated that they had arrangements for regular sector/departmental discussions; however, in all these cases discussions are usually concerned with matters of interest to the staff as employees although there is no strict limitation on what can be discussed. There appears to be no constitutional limitation on matters which can be discussed with management or members but on the other hand very little in the way of formal obligation to take views of staff into consideration when decisions are taken.

5. Facilities granted to the Staff Side

Authorities were asked about the extent of facilities granted to any full or part time employees' representatives. The replies indicated that many authorities are generous in the provision of accommodation, typing, telephone, distribution and photostating facilities. Most authorities seemed to allow leave with pay to attend courses, conferences, meetings, etc., Replies received by the ADC and AMA suggested that "reasonable time off" was generally allowed and extended in a number of cases to half the employees working hours per week while in the case of some authorities in membership of the AMA the Secretary of the employees' side of the Joint Consultative Committee is employed by the authority but devotes all his working time to joint committee work.

6. *Future Developments*

Against the background of the facts on the present situation set out in the preceding paragraphs of this note, the local authority Associations have been considering what proposals they could put to the TUC and the Government on the issue of industrial democracy in local government.

7. *The Associations agree on two basic points of principle as follows:-*

- a. Because local authorities are democratically elected bodies they are different from private industry and therefore employee participation in local government service must be on a different basis from that which may be possible in the private sector. The basic principle of democratic election means that, in the view of the Associations, there could be no question of employees serving as members of the full council or any committees of local authorities.
- b. On matters affecting pay and conditions of service there is a long history of consultation and negotiation within local government, and all authorities, both individually and collectively, have established with their staff appropriate machinery for negotiation of matters of this nature.

In so far as there is scope for a greater degree of consultation with the staff on broad policy issues which affect the interests of staff, it is a matter for each individual local authority to decide in consultation with the staff what further arrangements are appropriate.

8. Under these two principles direct participation of staff as members of councils or committees is ruled out. (But exercising the right of an individual authority to decide its own practice, the GLC/ILEA have decided that until such time as legislation might be passed to permit employee representatives to become non-voting members of committees and sub-committees of local authorities, they should be granted a standing invitation to attend and speak at meetings of most of the council's committees and sub-committees: the number of employee representatives should total not more than one-third of the membership of each committee or sub-committee.)

9. As noted in earlier paragraphs, many larger authorities already have arrangements for discussions in particular sectors with the staff involved in that sector of activities as part of the process of good management. Such consultation enables the staff concerned with a particular area of work to put their point of view, and to contribute their knowledge, to the local authority in respect of that sector of local authority's policy in which they are concerned. A development of joint staff consultation for various areas of activity might therefore be a way of developing employee participation. However, such meetings would be separate from the meetings of the Council and its committees and from normal negotiating machinery and would not therefore involve the representation of employees in the formal decision-making process.



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