

Leader of Southampton City Council condemns British Gas fire and rehire plan



As GMB members working for British Gas take their 23rd day of strike action, the Leader of Southampton City Council says ‘the use of fire and rehire is unnecessary and bullish.’

Christopher Hammond, Leader of Southampton City Council, has written to Chris O’Shea Chief Executive of Centrica calling for him to remove the threat of fire and rehire hanging over British Gas workers.



Councillor Hammond is the latest in a line of council leaders who have intervened in the long running dispute, which today enters the 23rd day of strike action so far by GMB members.

Around 7,000 British Gas engineers across the UK will down tools for four days from today (Friday February 26) until Monday March 4 over the company's plan to sack them all and rehire them on worse terms and conditions.

These are strike days 23 to 26 of the ongoing dispute.

Talks between GMB and British Gas are taking place at ACAS, but GMB says the company must drop its fire and rehire plan if a deal is to be possible.

After 22 days of strikes, more than 210,000 homes are in a backlog for repairs and 250,000 planned annual service visits have been axed.

Christopher Hammond, Leader of Southampton City Council said:

"British Gas engineers in Southampton have been important key workers during the pandemic, keeping homes warm and people healthy.

"It is disappointing to learn that while British Gas workers were carrying out these jobs, the company's leadership planned changes to their terms and conditions under the threat of fire and rehire.

"The use of fire and rehire is an unnecessary and bullish for any company, but disappointing that a company of Centrica's size and history would treat its staff in this way.

"As Leader of the Council, I am committed to using the procurement powers available to us to support good employers and quality jobs for local people.

"Future contracts, including those with Centrica/British Gas, will be assessed against our Green City and Social Value Procurement Policy – that expects good industrial relations."

Anne Chandler, GMB Organiser, said:

"It is clear from this letter from Councillor Christopher Hammond that the failure of British Gas to withdraw the threat of fire and rehire and come to an agreement is alienating key customers."

"GMB entered into recent ACAS brokered talks in good faith, but a deal is only possible if the company takes its fire and rehire plan off the table."



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Member requiring help?

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