

Solihull Council 'sitting on its hands' over coronavirus



GMB, the union for Local Government workers, has today slammed Solihull Council and private contractor Amey for forcing non-essential workers to continue working in the community despite official Government advice to stay at home.

Chris Barr, Head of Public Realm at Solihull Council, told a GMB officer that forcing workers to work during the lockdown gives 'a perception of safety'.

The news comes just days after a photo emerged on social media showing a worker in Solihull being forced to **cut the grass beneath a road sign reading 'STAY HOME ESSENTIAL TRAVEL ONLY'**. [1]



Neighbouring councils of Birmingham, Sandwell and Telford & Wrekin have all taken the decision to suspend non-essential grounds maintenance work.

Michelle Harris, GMB Organiser, said:

"While most of managers are working from home, Solihull Council are forcing some of their lowest-paid workers out on the streets to cut grass, trim hedges and blow leaves.

"There is little PPE and few social distancing measures have been put in place. It's needlessly putting workers' lives, and the lives of their families, at risk.

"Does Solihull Council really value the groundskeeping over the lives of its groundskeepers?"

"The heroes in our health service need local government to do everything they can to help stop the spread of Coronavirus. Solihull Council is sitting on its hands when we need them most.

"We've made it clear that our ground maintenance workers need to be either moved to key work, where good practices are in place, or furloughed immediately. We will not tolerate our members' health being put at unnecessary risk because the council failed to act in a global pandemic."

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Member requiring help?

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