

*This is an act of pure cowardice by Birmingham City Council, backed by their unelected commissioners. The council's continued escalation of this dispute has already cost taxpayers £34 million. Seeking this sweeping injunction shows they are more interested in wasting public money and hiding behind the courts than in resolving the strike.*

*"This council's contempt for its own workforce and the people of Birmingham could not be clearer. With elections coming this May, Labour councillors should start thinking about new jobs. We and our supporters will not end our solidarity with Birmingham's bin workers. You cannot ban solidarity.*

The [injunction application](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/WasteInjunctionPersonsUnknown)

(<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/WasteInjunctionPersonsUnknown>), issued on **3 February 2026**, seeks to prohibit for six months any protesting activity by persons unknown, without the council's consent, in support of strikes organised by Unite the Union. This includes entering, occupying, remaining on, or blocking access to the following council depots:

- Atlas Depot, 70/72 Kings Road, Tyseley, Birmingham, B11 2AS
- Lifford Lane Depot, Ebury Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B30 3JJ
- Perry Barr Depot, Holford Drive, Birmingham, B42 2TU
- Smithfield Depot, Sherlock Street, Birmingham, B5 6HX

National trade unions, including the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), a Labour Party affiliate, have pledged full support to the Birmingham bin workers and have attended all three mega-pickets held over the past year. FBU General Secretary **Steve Wright** has called on Prime Minister Keir Starmer to intervene and bring the dispute to an end.

Wright said:

**H F**

*Solidarity is a fundamental cornerstone of the trade union movement. Throughout history, employers have tried—and failed—to ban effective strikes and protests because they are powerful.*

*By seeking this injunction, Birmingham City Council has confirmed it is more interested in crushing this strike than resolving it, and is showing disregard for its own workforce. As a Labour-affiliated union, we will not stand by while a Labour council abandons the principles it claims to represent. We will be calling on other Labour-affiliated unions to express their grave concern over how this dispute has been handled.*

*It is now clear that the council and its commissioners are incapable of negotiating a settlement. That is why we are calling on the Prime Minister to step in and end this long-running dispute.*

ASLEF, the train drivers' union, has also pledged large-scale support for the striking workers. **Dave Calfe**, ASLEF General Secretary added:

*Let us be absolutely clear: standing with workers in struggle is not a crime. Solidarity cannot be banned by an injunction.*

*We are deeply disappointed by the actions of Labour's Birmingham City Council, which risk damaging the Labour Party both locally and nationally. This Labour government was elected to bring hope and deliver change for working people. Every day this dispute continues, that promise rings increasingly hollow.*

*The trade union movement will stand with Birmingham's bin workers. We call on the council to return to negotiations and abandon these shameful tactics.*

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# Birmingham council accused of cowardice as it seeks ban on protests in support of bin workers



**M** Part of the Megapicket in support of the striking Bin Workers in Birmingham, January 31, 2026 [Pic: Henry Fowler©]



**B**IRMINGHAM council was accused of cowardice today after it allegedly applied to ban protests in support of the Unite bin worker strikes that are by “persons unknown” and without its consent for six months.

A third “megapicket” organised by Strike Map during the long-running strike shut down every refuse site in England’s second city last week.

Unite members began walking out in January last year over plans to cut up to £8,000 cuts from their salaries and have done so continuously since March.

The failure to settle has cost at least £33 million, according to the Labour-run council’s estimates.

Strike Map said that the proposed ban, which was applied for on Tuesday, would effectively ban protesters from delaying refuse lorries from leaving depots.

Co-founder Henry Fowler said: “This is an act of pure cowardice by Birmingham City Council, backed by their unelected commissioners.

“The council’s continued escalation of this dispute has already cost taxpayers £34m. Seeking this sweeping injunction shows they are more interested in wasting public money and hiding behind the courts than in resolving the strike.

“This council’s contempt for its own workforce and the people of Birmingham could not be clearer. With elections coming this May, Labour councillors should start thinking about new jobs.

“We and our supporters will not end our solidarity with Birmingham’s bin workers. You cannot ban solidarity.”

Fire Brigades Union general secretary Steve Wright said: “By seeking this injunction, Birmingham City Council has confirmed it is more interested in crushing this strike than resolving it, and is showing disregard for its own workforce.

“It is now clear that the council and its commissioners are incapable of negotiating a settlement.

“That is why we are calling on the Prime Minister to step in and end this long-running dispute.”

Train drivers’ union Aslef general secretary Dave Calfe said: “Let us be absolutely clear: standing with workers in struggle is not a crime.

“We are deeply disappointed by the actions of Labour’s Birmingham City Council, which risk damaging the Labour Party both locally and nationally.

“This Labour government was elected to bring hope and deliver change for working people. Every day this dispute continues, that promise rings increasingly hollow.”

The council and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government were contacted for comment.



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## Birmingham City Council seeking injunction to stop protests outside depots

Hundreds of Unite members have been taking industrial action for more than a year including an all-out strike since last March in a dispute over pay.



Alamy

Author: Claire Emms

Published 4th Feb 2026



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Hundreds of Unite members have been taking industrial action for more than a year including an all-out strike since last March in a dispute over pay.

The latest mega picket led the council to suspend bin collections for a day.

The council has issued an application for an injunction for six months prohibiting protesting activities by "persons unknown" who, in support of strikes organised by Unite enter, occupy or block or obstruct certain depots in the city.

"The application does not seek to limit protesting activity that does not block or obstruct the provision of waste services in Birmingham, or to limit lawful picketing and protest activity carried out in accordance with the existing injunction granted by the High Court against Unite," the council said.

Strike Map co-founder Henry Fowler said: "This is an act of pure cowardice by Birmingham City Council, backed by their unelected commissioners.

"The council's continued escalation of this dispute has already cost taxpayers Â£34 million.

"Seeking this sweeping injunction shows they are more interested in wasting public money and hiding behind the courts than in resolving the strike."

We've approached Birmingham City Council for comment on this.

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Unite For A Workers' Economy

6 February at 15:04 · 🌐



This shows just how far [The Labour Party Birmingham Labour](#) has fallen. They've picked up the baton from the Tories on anti-protest laws and now seem determined to restrict our civil liberties and right to protest.

[Keir Starmer](#) [#LabourHasFallen](#)

## If the application is granted

If the court grants the application, anyone breaching the injunction, or a person who does anything that helps or permits a person to breach the terms of the order, might:

- be imprisoned for up to 2 years
- be fined
- have their assets seized for contempt of court



Unite For A Workers' Economy and 41 others

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Unite For A Workers' Economy

31 January at 16:05 · 🌐



"I think [Birmingham City Council](#) should take a little bit of notice here as it's passing the stage of no return for Labour in this city...This is a message to all political parties – if you come for our members, we will fight back no matter what colour rosette you wear."

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**Birmingham bin strike protesters fire local election warning to Labour as crucial May ballot approaches**

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Strike Map

5 February at 10:05 · 🌐



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Birmingham City Council seeking injunction to stop protests outside depots

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#StrikeMap



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**Birmingham City Council seeking injunction to stop protests outside depots**

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Strike Map

4 February at 17:28 · 🌐



⚠️ WARNING - this video contains effective picketing that some bosses may find offensive.

#StrikeMap



Birmingham Live · Follow

· 4 Feb · 🌐



*to the High Courts*

BirminghamLive

Birmingham City Council has issued an urgent bid to the high court to ban anyone protesting outside its bin depots and **Urgent Birmingham legal bid to stop protests outside bin depots or risk 'rubbish mountain'** It is the latest attempt by the crisis-hit council to break the damaging but persistent strike now lasted 14 months. If the council succeeds, it would stop anyone blowing down or blocking vehicles getting in and out of its four depots or collecting rubbish anywhere in Birmingham, under threat of 'prison, a fine or having assets seized'. The council says it is acting because demonstrators backing the Unite strike have successfully disrupted collections across the city, with their efforts escalating since Christmas. See less



audio

Birmingham Liv



Strike Map is with [The Morning Star](#).

4 February at 16:33 · 🌐

Birmingham council accused of cowardice as it seeks ban on protests in support of bin workers via [The Morning Star](#).

<https://morningstaronline.co.uk/.../birmingham-council...>

#StrikeMap #BirminghamBinStrike #BrumBinStrike #Megapicket #Megapicket2 #Megapicket3D



MORNINGSTARONLINE.CO.UK

**Birmingham council accused of cowardice as it seeks ban on protests in support of bin workers**

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Strike Map

4 February at 16:23 · 🌐



You cannot ban solidarity. Standing with workers is not a crime.

Shame on [Birmingham City Council](#) 🙄.

Get back to negotiations 🙌

[#StrikeMap](#)



Birmingham City Council ✓

4 February at 12:41 · 🌐



ANNOUNCEMENT RE BLOCKADING OF WASTE DEPOTS... [See more](#)

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Strike Map is with The Institute of Employment Rights.

4 February at 15:17 · 🌐



Birmingham City Council seeks injunction to ban 'Megapickets' and solidarity action

Read in full via [The Institute of Employment Rights](#) here:

<https://ier.org.uk/.../birmingham-city-council-seeks.../>

#StrikeMap #Birmingham #BrumBinStrike #BirminghamBinStrike



IER.ORG.UK

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Strike Map

4 February at 11:07 · 🌐



#StrikeMap co-founder, [Henry Fowler](#) on news of the injunction:

"With elections coming this May, Labour councillors should start thinking about new jobs. We and our supporters will not end our solidarity with Birmingham's bin workers. You cannot ban solidarity."

#BrumBinStrike



Strike Map

4 February at 10:47 · 🌐

STRIKE MAP PRESS RELEASE- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE... [See more](#)

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4 February at 10:47 · 🌐



STRIKE MAP PRESS RELEASE- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BREAKING NEWS 🚨 | [#Birmingham](#) City Council seeks injunction to ban [#Megapickets](#) and [#solidarity](#) action

Read in full via the comments.

[#StrikeMap](#)



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4 comments 17 shares

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**Reel News and Strike Map**

2 February at 20:52 · 🌐



Birmingham binworkers' strike: Megapicket 3 shuts down all depots

Hundreds of trade unionists swarmed to Birmingham for Megapicket 3 in support of striking binworkers facing paycuts of £8K a year - and shut down all the depots yet again.

Meanwhile, supporters who have been causing chaos all week blockading depots were up very early in the morning to stop the council pulling a fast one by shifting wagons to a bus depot and trying to get them out from there.

With street cleaners now extremely angry as well, and concerned they might be downgraded too, the pressure has built enormously on the council this week - and the binworkers have been given a huge moral boost.

Birmingham City Council: all it takes to stop all this is to come to the table and negotiate, something you have refused to do for over six months now. The binworkers are ready; John Cotton, where are you?



55

2 comments 30 shares 2.5K views

# Birmingham bin strike protesters fire local election warning to Labour as crucial May ballot approaches

Birmingham's striking bin workers and their supporters have fired a warning to the city council's ruling Labour group ahead of a critical election.

The ongoing bins strike, triggered by a dispute between the council and Unite the union, is set to be a major talking point in the May local [elections](#) in the city.

All 101 council seats across [Birmingham](#) are being contested, which means the election will decide which party or coalition runs the city council during the next four years.

With the industrial action now dragging on into its second year, bin workers and Unite members have recently warned that Labour in Birmingham could face paying a heavy price in the election if the strike is not resolved soon.

Speaking at a recent rally outside the council house, Unite organiser Claire Peden, 42, said: "We know councillors are up for election in May and they know themselves it's going to have a massive impact on their ability to be elected or re-elected.



*The bins strike 'megapicket' at the Perry Barr depot in Birmingham on Friday, January 30. Photo: Alexander Brock*

“I think the council should take a little bit of notice here as it’s passing the stage of no return for Labour in this city.”



*The bins strike 'megapicket' at the Perry Barr depot in Birmingham on Friday, January 30. Photo: Alexander Brock*

She added: “This is a message to all political parties – if you come for our members, we will fight back no matter what colour rosette you wear.”



*Claire Peden and Michael Agboh-Davison from Unite at the Birmingham bins strike rally on January 27. Photo: Alexander Brock*

Fellow Unite organiser Michael Agboh-Davison, 49, echoed similar thoughts, saying: “I think their actions have so far massively damaged their chances of retaining the council in May.

“I think they’ve got a chance if we resolve the dispute fairly for the workers now.



*The bins strike 'megapicket' at the Perry Barr depot in Birmingham on Friday, January 30. Photo: Alexander Brock*

“If we get into the election period in May and this is still going on, I think the effect on Birmingham Labour will be apocalyptic.”

Agency worker Luke, who joined the bins strike in the middle of November, said at the rally: “I feel like the people in charge of this council won’t be in charge much longer.

“The people who are next in charge need to listen more to their people and need to take action that people need.”

“If someone else steps in power, I hope they see Birmingham for what it is,” bin worker Steve told the Local Democracy Reporting Service.

“It’s a pleasant, vibrant city and it’s not that at the moment – it’s the vibrancy that we need back.

“Why would you want to come to a dirty city?”

Addressing a crowd of union members and protesters at the Perry Barr depot during the third ‘megapicket’ on Friday (January 30), one Unite speaker said: “We will stand strong and firm until a fair and reasonable offer is made.

“We’re ready to get round the table whenever t

“They know the elections are coming up and they’re under pressure, so with a bit of luck, we’ll get somewhere soon.”

Unite member Mike Masters also told the gathered crowd: “Birmingham wasn’t built by suits and ties – it was built by blood, sweat and tears.



*Unite member Mike Masters addresses the crowd at the bins strike 'megapicket' at the Perry Barr depot in Birmingham on Friday, January 30.  
Photo: Alexander Brock*

“12 months later, we are still fighting.”

### **‘City’s best days are ahead’**

The council’s leadership has argued that the bins strike dispute, initially sparked by the loss of a Waste Recycling and Collection Officer role, has not been resolved because of Unite ‘rejecting previous offers’.

The past 12 months or so have seen striking workers claim they face a pay cut of £8,000 – a figure the council has disputed.



*Birmingham council leader John Cotton at a meeting on Tuesday, January 27. Photo: Alexander Brock*

The council has insisted a fair offer had been made before negotiations came to an end last summer, with the authority saying it had ‘reached the absolute limit of what we can offer’ amid equal pay fears.



*The Birmingham bins strike rally on Tuesday, January 27. Photo: Alexander Brock*

The union claims that a “ballpark” deal had been agreed last year after hours of discussions but added this figure could not get past government-appointed commissioners.

Unite also claimed a new offer was much lower compared to the “ballpark” figure and therefore couldn’t be accepted.

Addressing the strike at a recent meeting, Birmingham council leader John Cotton said: “[Bringing this dispute to a close] has to be done on the basis of not reopening this council’s equal pay liabilities and delivering a modern waste service.

“Those points are non-negotiable – we are not going to repeat the mistakes of the past.”



*The Birmingham bins strike rally on January 27. Photo: Alexander Brock*

“We are open to dialogue to find a solution,” he continued.

“However, those points have to be non-negotiable – it would not be in the best interests of the taxpayers of this city if we were to do anything else.”

The council’s managing director Joanne Roney recently said there had to be a “reasonable amount of recognition for both parties”, particularly with the council’s equal pay and financial position.

“They are just parameters within which I have to operate,” she said. “[The council and Unite] are miles apart.”

Looking ahead to the local elections in May, Councillor Cotton acknowledged “the last few years haven’t been easy” amid the bins strike and council’s financial crisis.

“Tough decisions have had to be made but Labour is investing in Birmingham’s renewal and fixing the foundations,” he said.

“With a Labour council and a Labour Government working together side-by-side with a Labour mayor, the city’s best days are ahead.

“I’m looking forward to getting out on the campaign trail across Birmingham, hearing from local people and working together to shape the future of our great city.”

# Birmingham City Council seeking injunction to halt some bin strike protests

Birmingham City Council is seeking an injunction to halt protests outside some of its depots amid ongoing demonstrations in support of striking bin workers.

A series of so-called “mega pickets” has been organised by the Strike Map website. They have seen trade unionists from across the country join events in [the city](#) backing members of Unite.

Hundreds of Unite members have been taking industrial action for more than a year including an all-out strike since last March in a dispute over pay.

The latest mega picket led the city [council](#) to suspend bin collections for a day.

The council has issued an application for an injunction for six months prohibiting protesting activities by “persons unknown” who, in support of strikes organised by Unite enter, occupy or block or obstruct certain depots in the city.

“The application does not seek to limit protesting activity that does not block or obstruct the provision of waste services in Birmingham, or to limit lawful picketing and protest activity carried out in accordance with the existing injunction granted by the High Court against Unite,” the council said.

Strike Map co-founder Henry Fowler said: “This is an act of pure cowardice by Birmingham City Council, backed by their unelected commissioners.

“The council’s continued escalation of this dispute has already cost taxpayers £34 million.

“Seeking this sweeping injunction shows they are more interested in wasting public money and hiding behind the courts than in resolving the strike.”