

On behalf of: Claimant
By: Anthony Cox
No: First
Exhibit: AC
Date: 29 April 2026

KB-2026-BHM-000043

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

KING'S BENCH DIVISION

BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT REGISTRY

BETWEEN:

(1) BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

Claimant

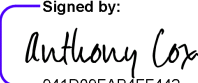
- and -

(1) PERSONS UNKNOWN

Defendant

EXHIBIT OF ANTHONY COX

This is the exhibit marked "**AC**" in the witness statement of **ANTHONY COX** dated this 29 April 2026.

Signed by: 
Signed: 941D09FAB4FF442.....

No.	Title	Date	Page Numbers
1	AC/1 BBC News Article	27 April 2026	2-5
2	AC/2 Email from John Cotton	27 April 2026	6-7
3	AC/3 Birmingham Live Article	28 April 2026	8-10
4	AC/4 Unite Statement	27 April 2026	11-14
5	AC/5 Birmingham Live Article	27 April 2026	15-17

Deal 'within sight' to end Birmingham bin strike



Image source, Mark Thomas

Image caption,

The long-running dispute has left residents with no recycling service

By Vanessa Pearce, West Midlands and Kathryn Stanczyszyn, Birmingham Political Reporter

An end to the bitter 14-month-long dispute by bin workers in Birmingham is "within sight", the city's Labour council leader has claimed.

Unite the Union members have been taking action since January last year, with an all-out strike launched in March, leaving rubbish piled on streets and residents with no recycling service.

Authority leader John Cotton said after months of "frustration and delay" he believed a new offer could now be made, which Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said was a "vindication" for striking workers.

However, opposition parties accused the administration of a "stunt" ahead of next Thursday's council elections and said they were playing "political games".

The dispute initially centred on the council's decision to remove Waste Recycling and Collection Officer (WRCO) roles, which it insisted was necessary to make improvements.

The union claimed about 170 affected workers faced losing up to £8,000 a year but the council disputed those figures.



Image caption,

Council leader John Cotton read a statement outside the Council House

Cotton said negotiations had been "challenging and complex," but an improved offer could be made, addressing issues discussed at the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) last year.

"A deal that would be good for the workforce, represent good value for money and would not repeat the mistakes of the past and risk creating new structural equal pay liabilities," he said.

The striking workers were praised by their union for getting a deal back on the table.

The full details will stay confidential while they wait for the detailed offer from the city council, Unite said, adding it would have to be voted on by the workers.

Graham said the offer was a "vindication of the bin workers' struggle for a decent deal".

"I salute the fortitude of my members who have needlessly been forced to endure months of attacks and hardship to get us to this point," she added.

£16k compensation

The union claimed the reason the offer had not yet been completed was down to government-appointed commissioners, who had been employed to help the council balance the books.

Onay Kasab, Unite national lead officer said the offer would include compensation of £16,000 for workers.

Previous offers did not include compensation for drivers, Kasab said, and this change helped bring the dispute close to a conclusion.

The announcement marks a significant moment in the long-running saga that has caused so much disruption, but is far from over.

The Labour administration said they had the framework of a deal that could end the strike and will instruct officers to move ahead if they are still in power after the local election.

Labour currently holds 65 of 101 seats which could significantly change after polling day, on 7 May, when all seats are being contested.

'Political games'

Moments after Cotton spoke publicly outside the Council House, the opposition parties were quick to condemn the timing of the announcement which comes 10 days before voters in Birmingham go to the polls.

The city's Conservative group leader, Robert Alden, said Labour had put its political interests ahead of residents, calling it an "election stunt".

"If Labour had a lawful deal, they would already have put it to the council to agree months ago," he said.

A Reform UK spokesperson said the authority had come back to the same deal which it rejected last year and "nothing has changed except the election timetable".

The leader of the Green Party, councillor Julien Pritchard, accused Labour of playing "political games".

"Labour could have resolved this strike months ago, saving misery and millions of pounds," he said.

Liberal Democrat leader, Roger Harmer, echoed criticism by other parties, calling the move "nothing short of a cynical pre-election ploy by a Labour Party heading for a massive defeat".



Image source, Reuters

Image caption,

The council said it was pressing ahead with its new waste service from June

New fortnightly collections

Some workers have left the authority through a voluntary scheme with others facing compulsory redundancy.

New fortnightly waste and recycling collections are set to be rolled out across the city, despite the ongoing strike, the council had previously announced.

A weekly food waste collection is also set to start with changes starting to be implemented from June.

Get in touch

Tell us which stories we should cover in Birmingham and the Black Country

[Contact form](#)

Follow BBC Birmingham on [BBC Sounds](#), [Facebook](#), [external](#), [X](#), [external](#) and [Instagram](#), [external](#).



From: Councillor John Cotton <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 27 April 2026 13:23
To: Joanne Roney <[REDACTED]>; Rishi Shori <[REDACTED]>; Anthony Cox <[REDACTED]>; Carol Culley <[REDACTED]>; Katy Fox <[REDACTED]>; Eleri Roberts <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Richard Costello <[REDACTED]> Geoffrey Coleman <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Today's statement

Dear all,

Further to our meeting, I want to put on record my thanks to you all for your efforts to date to bring this dispute to a close. You have been doing complex work to navigate a challenging situation, and I very much appreciate all you continue to do.

As discussed, I will shortly be making a statement to the media in my capacity as Leader of the Labour group regarding the waste dispute and the prospects for a negotiated settlement. The text of that statement is below.

You will note that I make it clear that whilst I have asked officers to commence negotiations, the pre-election period prevents any decision being taken by the Council before the election is concluded. However, I am giving a commitment that a newly elected Labour administration will work to get this deal approved as a priority, whilst remaining steadfast in delivering the equal pay settlement we all worked so hard to secure.

In making this statement, I am exercising the same right that the other Group Leaders have already made full use of, to make statements of political intent during the election campaign. However, given my dual role as Leader of the Council, I wanted to give you the courtesy of advance notice of my intentions.

This statement is strictly embargoed until 2pm.

Best wishes,

John

Councillor John Cotton
Leader of Birmingham City Council
Labour & Co-op Councillor for Glebe Farm & Tile Cross Ward

Birmingham City Council | The Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB

Tel [REDACTED] | Email [REDACTED]

STATEMENT

“After months of frustration and delay, for the first time in over 12 months a negotiated settlement to end the bin strike is now within sight.

“This has been a challenging and complex process, but after months of hard work, on the principles and parameters of a deal, I believe a new improved offer can be made and terms can be put in place that addresses the ballpark issues discussed at ACAS, that Unite members can agree in order to end the strike once and for all. A deal that would be good for the workforce, represent good value for money and would not repeat the mistakes of the past and risk creating new structural equal pay liabilities.

“I want our workforce to be able to return to work and help us deliver the quality refuse and recycling services the people of this city deserve. That’s why throughout this dispute I have resisted those who would dismiss the striking workers instead of negotiating.

“I have instructed officers to move forward with negotiations so that we can bring this matter to a close.

“Whilst the pre-election period prevents the Council from making a final decision prior to 7 May, a re-elected Labour administration under my leadership will work to get this deal approved as a matter of absolute priority. The council can then move forward and offer the people of Birmingham the services that they deserve.

“I also want to re-emphasise my absolute determination to see through the agreement reached with the council's unions last year that will deliver the pay justice that thousands of women workers were denied under previous leaderships.

“I would like to thank the people of Birmingham for their patience during this challenging time. It’s now clear that whilst other parties have no plan, only Labour can end this dispute and deliver a refuse service that works for everyone in Birmingham.”

ENDS

OFFICIAL

Birmingham City Council The information contained within this e-mail (and any attachment) sent by Birmingham City Council is confidential and may be legally privileged. It is intended only for the named recipient or entity to whom it is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient please accept our apologies and notify the sender immediately. Unauthorised access, use, disclosure, storage or copying is not permitted and may be unlawful. Any e-mail including its content may be monitored and used by Birmingham City Council for reasons of security and for monitoring internal compliance with the office policy on staff use. E-mail blocking software may also be used. Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the originator and do not necessarily represent those of Birmingham City Council. We cannot guarantee that this message or any attachment is virus free or has not been intercepted and amended.

Ex-Birmingham binman says council 'should have done this a year ago' amid 'deal' to end strike

Former binman David Callaghan says the city council 'should have done this 12 months ago' after it emerged an end to the bin strike could be 'within sight'

A former Birmingham binman said council bosses "should have done this 12 months ago" after it emerged an end to the bin strike was "within sight".

Article continues below

John Cotton, leader of the Labour-run [Birmingham City Council](#), announced on Monday afternoon, April 27, that the basis of a deal had been struck with the union Unite [to end the long-running dispute](#).

But Coun Cotton said the pre-election period prevented the authority from making a final decision prior to May 7 - the day residents will head to the polls.

READ MORE: [End of Birmingham bin strike 'within sight' - live updates](#)

Speaking days before the election, he said he would "work to get this deal approved as a matter of absolute priority" under his leadership, if re-elected.

Union boss Onay Kasab confirmed the terms of the "ballpark" deal included a £16,000 payout for bin workers whose pay and grading had been affected by the dispute.

Unite said it was a "vindication of the bin workers' struggle for a decent deal following their job evaluation regrading".

The union also claimed commissioners were the reason the deal had not yet been presented to Unite members.

Former binman speaks out

Former grade four binman David Callaghan, speaking to BirminghamLive following the news, said: "They should have done this 12 months ago. To let it go on for this long...it's shocking.

Article continues below

"I've been a Labour supporter all my life, as I believed they were for the working class, but I feel let down by the party. I'm not sure I'd vote for them again. They're pulling their hair out now trying to stay [in power]."

The 58-year-old, who accepted a redundancy package last year, said: "I was a grade four driver and I was one of those who were going to lose £8,000.

"I had 35 years of service and thought 'I've not worked all those years to get to where I am today, just to then earn what I did 15 years ago'."

Mr Callaghan said he "jumped ship" in September and accepted a redundancy package which wasn't exactly what he "wanted", but admitted it seemed to be "working" for his family "at the moment".

He said he would be extremely "happy" for his former colleagues if a deal was officially struck.

John Cotton full statement

Coun Cotton, speaking outside the council house, said: "After months of frustration and delay, for the first time in over 12 months, a negotiated settlement to end the bin strike is now within sight.

"This has been a challenging and complex process, but after months of hard work on the principles and parameters of a deal, I believe a new improved offer can be made and terms put in place that address the ballpark issues discussed at ACAS that Unite members can agree in order to end the strike once and for all.

"A deal that would be good for the workforce, represent good value for money, and would not repeat the mistakes of the past and risk creating new structural equal pay liabilities.

"I want our workforce to be able to return to work and to help us deliver the quality refuse and recycling services that people of this city deserve.

"That's why throughout this dispute, I have resisted those who would dismiss striking workers instead of negotiating.

"I have instructed officers to move forward with negotiations so we can bring this matter to a close.

"Now whilst the pre-election period prevents the council from making a final decision prior to the 7th of May, a re-elected Labour administration under my leadership will work to get this deal approved as a matter of absolute priority.

"The council can then move forward and offer the people of Birmingham the services that they deserve.

"I also want to re-emphasise my absolute determination to see through the agreement that was reached with the council's unions last year that will deliver the pay justice that thousands of women workers were denied under previous leaderships.

"And I'd like to thank the people of Birmingham for their patience during this challenging time.

"It's now clear that whilst other parties have no plan, only Labour can end this dispute and deliver a refuse service that works for everyone in Birmingham. Thank you very much indeed."

Unite full statement

Unite general secretary, Sharon Graham said: "As I have said on many occasions, the workers come first and we will always do everything in our power to ensure that our members are treated with dignity and respect.

"The move made today by the leader of the council is a vindication of the bin workers' struggle for a decent deal.

"Over the last few months, there have been intense negotiations to get the blocked "ballpark" deal back on the table, so that our members could vote on it.

"The reason why we are not yet at that stage is purely down to the vindictive interference of the government backed commissioners who have attempted to block the deal again and clearly overstepped their remit.

"Their lack of both experience and industrial relations competence has been a major factor in this dispute, and their malevolent game playing has been an absolute disgrace.

"The commissioner model is a licence for a few unelected individuals to print money and play games.

"They have let the workers down, the people of [Birmingham](#) down and the council down.

"I salute the fortitude of my members who have needlessly been forced to endure months of attacks and hardship to get us to this point.

Article continues below

"I thank mayor Richard Parker and Lord Brendan Barber for the important roles both have played in getting us to this point.

"And I thank the people of Birmingham for their continued patience and support."



(/)

JOIN NOW (HTTPS://JOIN.UNITETHEUNION.ORG/)

(https://myunite.unitetheunion.org/)

Home (/)

News & Events (/news-events)

News (/news-events/news)

Council statement on improved offer for Birmingham bin workers vindicates year long struggle, Unite



Council statement on improved offer for Birmingham bin workers vindicates year long struggle, Unite

Monday 27 April 2026

Share

The Birmingham council statement today by leader John Cotton - in relation to an improved offer based on the “ballpark” deal agreed at the conciliation service Acas and blocked by government commissioners – is a vindication of the bin workers’ struggle for a decent deal following their job evaluation regrading.

This move shows the power of workers and how that can be realised when they are backed by their union.

It is an absolute abhorrence that this deal has been blocked not just once but twice by unelected unaccountable commissioners and officers at Birmingham City Council, who enjoy eye watering pay packets and no consequence for their actions.

The commissioner model is a licence for a few unelected individuals to print money and play games.

The reason the offer has not yet been completed and gone to our members is because at the eleventh hour the government backed commissioners attempted to stop it, which has led to today’s statement of intent by the leader of Council.



Negotiations took place over the last few months to get the original Acas deal back on track, between: Sharon Graham general secretary of Unite, John Cotton leader of the council, Richard Parker mayor of West Midlands, facilitated by Lord Brendan Barber.

The roles played by mayor Parker and Lord Barber should be recognised as they very quickly saw that the deal was both reasonable and doable.

But ultimately it was the resolve of striking workers and their union that has got this ballpark deal back on the table.

The full details of the deal will remain confidential awaiting the detailed offer from the council and it will have to be voted on by the bin workers.

The broad outline of the ballpark deal is:

- The deal mirroring the Acas ballpark agreement means that workers would get not six months cushion from the impacts of the job evaluation process but a minimum of two years
 - Striking agency workers with 12 months plus of employment on the contract will be offered a path to permanent employment
 - Disciplinary issues will be quashed and the gross misconduct issue reviewed
 - For pension purposes the dispute will be treated as authorised absence
- Legal action on both sides will be ended.

There will now be a series of meetings to complete the offer and if it is reneged on in anyway then the union will escalate the dispute.

Unite general secretary, Sharon Graham said: **“As I have said on many occasions, the workers come first and we will always do everything in our power to ensure that our members are treated with dignity and respect.**

“The move made today by the leader of the council is a vindication of the bin workers’ struggle for a decent deal.

“Over the last few months, there have been intense negotiations to get the blocked “ballpark” deal back on the table, so that our members could vote on it.

“The reason why we are not yet at that stage is purely down to the vindictive interference of the government backed commissioners who have attempted to block the deal again and clearly overstepped their remit.

“Their lack of both experience and industrial relations competence has been a major factor in this dispute, and

their malevolent game playing has been an absolute disgrace.

“The commissioner model is a licence for a few unelected individuals to print money and play games.

“They have let the workers down, the people of Birmingham down and the council down.

“I salute the fortitude of my members who have needlessly been forced to endure months of attacks and hardship to get us to this point.

“I thank mayor Richard Parker and Lord Brendan Barber for the important roles both have played in getting us to this point.

“And I thank the people of Birmingham for their continued patience and support.”

ENDS

For media enquiries ONLY please contact Unite senior communications advisor Barckley Sumner on 07802 329235.

Email: barckley.sumner@unitetheunion.org

Twitter: @unitetheunion Facebook: unitetheunion1 Instagram: unitetheunion Web: unitetheunion.org

Unite is the UK and Ireland’s leading union fighting to protect and advance jobs, pay and conditions for members working across all sectors of the economy. The general secretary is Sharon Graham

Further reading

BP bumper profits from Iran war as workers brace for living costs surge (/news-events/news/2026/april/bp-bumper-profits-from-iran-war-as-workers-brace-for-living-costs-surge)

Regional Officer – South West – Closing Date: 8 June 2026 (/current-vacancies/regional-officer-south-west-closing-date-8-june-2026)

Stormont Executive must put protections for workers during extreme weather events in law (/news-events/news/2026/april/stormont-executive-must-put-protections-for-workers-during-extreme-weather-events-in-law)

Spycops inquiry must examine undercover police blacklisting collusion (/news-events/news/2026/april/spycops-inquiry-must-examine-undercover-police-blacklisting-

Every striking Birmingham bin worker 'to get £16,000 payout' but there's a catch

Unite say the deal on the table from Labour would end the bin strike - but is it too good to be true?

John Cotton makes a statement outside the Council House on the bin strike

Every bin worker at [Birmingham City Council](#) affected by pay cuts and downgrades would pick up a £16,000 payout as part of a strike-ending deal proposed by the Labour leadership, it was claimed today.

Article continues below

In a surprise statement, the council's Labour leader John Cotton claimed the end of the 16-month strike was 'in sight' based on a deal reached between Labour politicians and leaders of the Unite union.

He told reporters in [Victoria Square](#) today, Monday, April 27, the proposal the table "would be good for the workforce, represent good value for money and would not repeat the mistakes of the past and risk creating new structural equal pay liabilities".

Article continues below

READ MORE: [End of Birmingham bin strike 'within sight' - live updates](#)

He called a press conference to make his announcement and media arrived expecting to learn the strike was over.

But instead, in a move that political rivals dismissed as 'an election stunt', he announced a deal was now "in sight" based on talks between Unite and Labour politicians.

The two sides claimed they had reached a ballpark deal that could bring the dispute to an end - as long as Labour were re-elected to run the council on May 7.

The deal would have to be approved by council officers, commissioners and Unite members, as well as being approved by the incoming political administration, and be subject to legal sign-off.

Unite's national officer Onay Kasab fleshed out the proposal and said it would include a £16,000 payout to every affected bin worker, including bin lorry drivers who had been downgraded.

It would also include a route to permanent jobs for agency bins workers, agreements over staff who had been 'acting up' and pensions gaps being filled, he claimed.

The deal needed 'finalising and to go to our members', Mr Kasab said, but it was a key moment in the dispute.

He said a 'genuine offer' had been put on the table by Labour that met Unite's demands.

He said Labour West Midlands mayor Richard Parker had played a key role in getting the proposal agreed.

He also claimed senior Labour politicians - up to Prime Minister Keir Starmer - were 'more than aware' of what was being proposed.

"(Unite general secretary) Sharon Graham has been lobbying let's say at the very very highest levels (of Labour) to get this ballpark deal back on the table and that's what she has achieved."

Asked if it was a 'cynical bid' to get voters to save Labour in Birmingham, aided by a Labour-affiliated union, he added: "My priority is our members. If others think it is a political stitch-up that's not for me to say.

"We are only where we are now because of our members being on the picket line with the 100 per cent backing of Sharon Graham. What we have from them now potentially gives us an agreement."

He blamed government-appointed commissioners, led by Tony McArdle, for blocking a deal until now.

But he said the deal would need to be agreed and signed off by 'whoever is in charge' at the council after polling day.

Cynical political opponents decried it as a 'stunt' saying there was no deal and it was a ploy to try to keep Labour in charge in [Birmingham](#).

Coun Robert Alden, Local Conservatives group leader, said it was meaningless. "There is no lawful deal to end the bin strike, despite the Labour leader's posturing," he said.

Labour insiders were asked if the announcement was a mirror image of the flawed and highly-controversial deal struck between former Labour leader John Clancy and the bins union in 2017.

That deal ended in massive recriminations, triggering Clancy's demotion and a wave of new equal pay claims. They denied that was the case.

Unite previously pressed for a very similar deal involving payouts to affected workers. But at the time, last July, the Labour-led council walked away from negotiations, claiming they could not do the deal Unite wanted without jeopardising new equal pay issues.

In a statement headlined 'Labour and Unite reach agreement that will end the bin strike' Coun Cotton said: "A re-elected Labour administration under my leadership will work to get this deal approved as a matter of absolute priority. The council can then move forward and offer the people of Birmingham the services that they deserve."

Coun Roger Harmer, Liberal Democrat local leader, said: "There is no deal, and pretending there is only threatens to make it harder to resolve this strike. A deal can only be made by senior officers and I am told they have played no part in developing this proposal. This is nothing short of a cynical pre-election ploy by a [Labour Party](#) heading for a massive defeat."

Article continues below

Green party local leader Julien Pritchard added: "Brummies are rightly fed-up with the political games from Labour - suddenly 'finding' a solution days from a local election is the self-interested politics that our communities are so fed-up with."

