



## Leeds council under pressure on energy project

23 Mar 2022

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Construction workers will be protesting today, Wednesday 23 March, at the Civic Hall, Leeds to ensure workers employed on a new waste-to-energy plant at Skelton Grange in the city should be paid the rate for the job.

Leeds City Council has granted planning permission for the project but has failed to stipulate that it should be built using the National Agreement for the Engineering Industry (NAECI), the appropriate national agreement for this type of construction work.

**Where:** Leeds Civic Hall, Calverley Street, Leeds, LS1 1UR

**When:** Wednesday 23 March 2022

**Time:** 11.30 until 14.00

The protesting workers, who are members of GMB and Unite, fear that unless Leeds council ensures that the NAECI agreement is utilised, undercutting will occur on the project and the rate for the job will not be honoured.

More than 500 construction workers will be employed on the £250 million project, which will eventually provide power for 100,000 homes.

The project is being built for Enfinium by principal contractor Hitachi Zosen Inova (HZI), who have stated that they do not intend to use the NAECI agreement.

In addition to pay rates, the unions are concerned that workers will not benefit from enhanced overtime rates, mileage and lodging allowances, which frequently occurs when companies avoid using construction industry agreements.

There are growing fears that local labour will not be employed on the site, nor local skills training provided. This would be particularly short-sighted as construction apprenticeships in the area are few and far between and the Skelton Grange project is a prime opportunity for employers to help plug the skills gap the UK construction sector is facing.

**Charlotte Childs, GMB National Officer, said:**

“GMB members and the national agreement have served the construction industry well. Union jobs are safer, better paid and the buildings well built. It makes sense to adopt the national agreement to get this project built.

"GMB will hold to account any client or contractor who tries to circumnavigate the hard-fought rights our members have won. HZI needs to get round the table with GMB and Unite to bring this project under the agreement."

**Sharon Graham, Unite General Secretary, said:**

“Leeds council and its councillors have to step up to the plate and tell HZI in no uncertain terms that it must play by the rules and follow the NAECI agreement.

“Unite will be giving its members full support in ensuring that the rate for the job is paid on this project.”

