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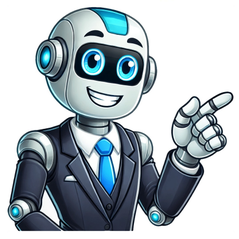

We're going to end our live coverage for today, thanks for joining us.Talks to end the strike have finished for the day without a deal and are set to continue tomorrow.Our reporters Josh Sandiford, Anna Whittaker, David Lumb, Sarah Julian and Rob Mayor have been reporting from the streets of Birmingham through the day.Here's what they found:Image source, PA Media Caroline GallBBC News Lichfield District Council has announced it will provide support to help clear the piles of rubbish in nearby Birmingham.“Our crews and vehicles are being deployed - not to carry out routine bin collections, but to help clear the mountains of uncollected waste that have built up on the streets of Birmingham," leader Doug Pullen said."The city is currently seeing rubbish accumulate at a staggering rate of around 1,000 tonnes each week.” The support is being provided at a commercial rate, meaning Lichfield residents will not bear any cost for the assistance being given, he added.He said the council was "proud to be a good neighbour", but its first duty was to Lichfield."I can reassure residents that our routine services will remain unaffected and our teams will continue to deliver the high standards people rightly expect," he said.The first collections will begin on Wednesday. Caroline GallBBC News Here's a look at the day in photos.Local residents have been delivering their rubbish to mobile collection vehicles in Erdington and Billesley as the strike continues.Image source, PA MediaImage source, PA MediaImage source, PA Media Image source, PA MediaAsked if it could be another few weeks before a solution is found, Unite regional officer Zoe Mayou said she hoped not, but it would depend on how often the two parties could meet.“We’re trying to all work as quick as we can. Unfortunately things don’t always progress, for various reasons, as quick as anyone would like,” she said.“We are trying to work on this [the dispute]. We had a meeting today and we do want to resolve this." Sadia Khan and her fellow Friends of Spark Green Park are just the sort of volunteers Ayoub Khan could have been talking about in the Commons.She told us last week that her team had found it hard to clear an increase in rubbish dumped in the park, including builders' waste."It's so hard for our littler pickers to remove rubble and brick. It is getting a lot more of a nuisance. There's rats you can see in broad daylight," she said.Ms Khan added that the volume of rubbish was also an issue for many businesses across the city, including food outlets in the Balti Triangle, and a concern for both public health and residents' mental health. "It's depressing, it shouldn't be the norm. Children shouldn't have to wade through it on their way to school," she said. Image source, UK ParliamentA Birmingham MP has repeated his suggestion for the government to deploy the Army to help clear up the city’s streets.Speaking in the House of Commons, Ayoub Khan, independent MP for Birmingham Perry Barr, asked whether the Army could be used to “assist the local charities and organisations” that were trying to clear some of the rubbish.Local government minister Jim McMahon said in response that the government wanted a “sustainable deal that can hold”, including one that did not “stray into potentially compromising the equal pay settlement”.“Bearing in mind, that's already £1bn of cost to the local authority,” he added. Caroline GallBBC News Image source, Harry ClaytonBirmingham student Harry Clayton shares a house with seven others and said their home now has an ant infestation due to rubbish not being collected.“People respond to the news saying residents can sort their own rubbish out, and that we just don't care, but we live in a student house of eight people, with no cars and no parents who live locally," the 22-year-old told BBC News.“Taking our own litter, which would need to be done multiple times a week, is simply not possible for us, and with the bin men now not working, it has left us no other choice than to leave litter outside, and let ant infestations bear down on our home due to the litter." Unite regional officer Zoe Mayou said this afternoon's meeting with the council, which lasted a couple of hours, was "productive".She told the BBC: “Things are moving forward. Obviously these things take time and we have arranged a further meeting tomorrow.” Ms Mayou said both Unite and the council have agreed not to go into the details of what they were talking about publicly.“All I can say is we both want an end to this dispute," she added. "We both want to come together and it really is just looking at how we can do that mutually, and what the timescales are around that.” Anna WhittakerReporting from Billesley Maksood Altaf packed his rubbish into his family car, including the wheelie bin, before he went to the mobile tip in Billesley.“I’ve padded out the car with cardboard so nothing leaks out," he said. “It’s terrible. I’ve seen dead rats outside my house since the rubbish hasn’t been collected.” Asked about residents’ hopes that there could be a temporary halt to the strike action, Unite regional officer Zoe Mayou said “not for now”.She said it might be considered if the council offered the striking workers “something more concrete” but it had not been discussed.“I’m sure the people of Birmingham would love that. If we can get something and our members agree to do that, then we will,” she added“Unfortunately, we’re not in that position at the moment.” Rob MayorPolitical reporter, Birmingham Image source, PA MediaBirmingham City Council has high hopes of what it can achieve despite the strike, now that its trucks can leave depots without delay. At the depot in Tyseley for example, it was taking a couple of hours for bin wagons to reach the end of the road as they were delayed by striking workers. This morning I saw half a dozen leave unimpeded before 06:30. The council says it had more than 20 bin lorries out on Saturday and on Sunday, and I’ve seen street cleaning teams reassigned to bin trucks this morning, tackling some of the worst spots in the Alum Rock area. But with 17,000 tonnes of rubbish to clear, it’s going to take some time. BBC Midlands Today reporter David Lumb has been in Billesley, Birmingham, speaking to residents using a temporary waste collection site.One person told him the rubbish makes the city look like a "Third World country", while another said she faced the prospect of disposing of her bin bags after a long 12-hour shift at work.You can watch what residents had to say in this short video clip:Media caption, 'It's like we live in a Third World country,' Birmingham resident tells BBC reporter Image source, PA MediaOliver Staunton in our last post isn't the only local resident hoping for a long-term solution.That's because strikes by bin workers in 2017 were equally as disruptive.That seven-week dispute was over restructuring plans.It ended with an agreement from the council that certain posts would not be made redundant and union officials in return recommended staff considered accepting rota changes.There was also a dispute in 2019 when Unite claimed members of the GMB union were given larger "conciliatory payments" at the resolution of the 2017 dispute.The GMB union said this was because its members did not take part in the strike and the extra payments were because they had been left out of conciliatory talks.That dispute ended the following month when a financial settlement was agreed to satisfy Unite members. Josh SandifordBBC News, West Midlands Oliver Staunton from Erdington, like many of us, are wondering how this strike can be resolved.Speaking before news of the latest collapse in talks, he said: "I can understand why the council are saying they want to standardise the rates of payment and I can understand why the workers wouldn't want to accept that, so it seems like a deadlock."Mr Staunton says he's hoping for a "long-term solution" to prevent another strike taking place a few years down the line. Caroline GallBBC News, West Midlands The strike began on 11 March, but how close, or not, are the council and union Unite to reaching an agreement?Talks between the two parties have ended again today with no deal, after also breaking down last week.There have, however, been offers on the table, including about offering workers alternative roles.All affected staff have been offered other jobs at the same pay, the council said, adding that almost three-quarters of them had either taken up the offer, or decided to take voluntary redundancy.Up to 41 workers have declined any offer, and 35 who opted for driver training "have also told us via a letter from Unite that they are working under protest", the council said.The next round of talks will begin tomorrow afternoon, this time at the city council's offices.A formal period of consultation by the council as it looks to make compulsory redundancies for those who have declined deals began on 31 March.The union has said it hopes the council will have a change of heart over the potential redundancies and added that by threatening redundancies it sent a message it was not serious about resolving the dispute. Today's talks between Birmingham City Council and the Unite union have ended without agreement. Unite said the talks were "productive" but there was "a way to go". Negotiations are due to resume on Tuesday. Phil MackieBBC News Midlands correspondent Daniel Taylor has worked on the bin lorries for 25 years. He told me he faces losing £6,000 a year if he’s downgraded, and has five kids to support."It's a lot of money to lose. We're living in a financial crisis, a cost of living crisis. There's rent, phone bills, car fuel, insurance to pay," he said.He explained how he was at the top of his band as a loader, but under the new structure would be dropped to a Grade 2 role. Instead he has been offered a role as a driver, but he has to pass a test first."The council says it wants to modernise the service. You don't modernise the services by cutting people's wages. Especially when there is a cost-of-living crisis," he said.The strikers want to get back to work, he added, and clear the streets."We want a breakthrough. We don't want to be out here. We want to be out there doing our jobs. We enjoy our jobs."It's not a good look for Birmingham at all. There is mess everywhere." Aerial footage shows a mile-long line of traffic as residents in a part of Birmingham queued to use a mobile waste collection site.Similar sites have proven to be a lifeline for many people since an all-out strike by bin workers began on 11 March. This short video that we've just seen, but which was filmed on Friday, shows cars bumper-to-bumper in Bartley Green. Footage shot by Joe BarrettMedia caption, Watch: Drone footage shows long queues for rubbish collection point Kathryn StanczyszynBBC Radio WM presenter in Washwood Heath Kamran Khursheed lives in the Washwood Heath area of Birmingham and says bin bags have been piling up on the streets around him for more than six weeks.He's calling for something to be "done about it now" and says the issue is just getting worse, particularly around Fernbank Road.“The sight, the stench, the mess – it’s got to end. It’s embarrassing as well," he adds. "We’re England, the world is seeing this and it’s just not right at all." Alex McIntyreBBC News, West Midlands Image source, PA MediaThe all-out bin workers strike in Birmingham began in March but the dispute was going on for months before that.6 January: Bin workers who are members of the Unite union walk out in what was originally meant to be the first of 12 days of strike action taking place over four months.3 February: Unite announces an intensification of industrial action, with 12 days of strikes scheduled for February. 26 February: The union announces a further escalation11 March: An all-out strike begins as more than 350 refuse workers take indefinite industrial action. 27 March: Talks between the city council and Unite break down. The former threatens compulsory redundancies for those who have “declined all offers on the table”.31 March: The council declares a major incident in response to concerns of risks to public health and damage to the environment. It claims picket lines blocking depots have prevented refuse vehicles from getting out, leading to about 17,000 tonnes of rubbish not being collected.2 April: The bin strike is raised during Prime Minister’s Questions and Sir Keir Starmer says the government will put in whatever support the council needs.3 April: Unite general secretary Sharon Graham writes to deputy prime minister Angela Rayner and accuses ministers of sitting on their hands.5 April: Rayner meets council leaders to discuss ways of clearing the streets. Bin collections were set to be hit today with a second 'megapicket' underway across Birmingham in unity support of striking workers. The Strike Map group is organising the “Five Sites, One Day” picket involving 26 organisations from across the trade union movement, including the RMT, ASLEF, NEU, NASUWT, and the BMA. READ MORE: Birmingham bin strike latest as solidarity 'megapicket' halts waste wagons READ MORE: Birmingham City Council to take Unite to court over bin truck 'blocking' Protesters were at sites of Tyseley, Perry Barr and Pershore/Sherlock Street in Birmingham, as well as two locations in Coventry, from 6am today. It is the second largest protest of its kind after it first went ahead in May. The Birmingham bin strike over pay and the removal of roles started in January. Full scale industrial action was then taken from March 11. Strike Map co-founder Henry Fowler said: “Mass picketing is back. The trade union movement has shown it is at its most powerful when it acts together. Workers supporting workers. "This is the second successful Megapicket in Birmingham and it is even bigger than last time, showing that everyone is behind these workers.” Gawain Little, from the General Federation of Trade Unions, said today: “I think it’s really important that the trade unions have come together to show solidarity with the bin workers. "What’s been done to them is unacceptable.” The gates to the depot at Tyseley are currently closed and it appears no bin lorries are currently leaving the site. This is a breaking news article. For further updates, please follow the live blog below.10:40Ben PerrinFormer Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn urged Birmingham City Council to “get a deal now” as a second ‘megapicket’ disrupted bin collections.Latest here.Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn attends the second Birmingham bins strike 'megapicket' on Friday, July 25 (Image: Alexander Brock)10:24Ben PerrinThe city council has issued a statement after disruption to collections despite a court order being in place.We are taking this step to ensure the safety of our city and the safety of our workforce, including those who are on strike," it said.Our injunction prevents the blocking of our refuse collection vehicles, both at our depots and on the streets. Despite writing repeatedly to Unite for several weeks to highlight what we believe to be clear breaches of the injunction the situation has worsened.Since the injunction was granted, vehicles have been blockaded on roads to and from our depots, with Unite representatives and members stepping in front of, and even leaning against, moving heavy vehicles and blocking road junctions.This is dangerous and a serious health and safety risk for the public, the protestors and our workers as well as causing delays to waste collections and to traffic around the city.We have said all along that we support the right to peaceful protest and picketing and nothing in our court application today prevents or restricts that or prevents anybody from going on strike.The injunction has ordered Unite to ensure all pickets and protests are done safely and lawfully. However nearly every day Unite representatives are blocking roads, slow walking in front of vehicles and abusing our workforce.We will now go to court to ensure the safety of all involved and that the terms of the injunction – which has been agreed to by Unite – is adhered to.”10:05Ben PerrinThe solidarity 'megapicket' halted waste wagons today.And the council has responded.Latest here.09:11Ben PerrinJeremy Corbyn has told the crowds today: “It wasn’t the Birmingham bin workers who got the finances of Birmingham City Council into a mess.“It wasn’t the bin workers who created any of the problems that Birmingham faces.“They are the people that keep the city clean."Jeremy Corbyn addresses the crowds at the megapicket 2 in Birmingham on July 25 09:08Ben PerrinThe Megapicket is supported by Artists Union England, ASLEF, BFAWU, Blacklist Support Group, Birmingham TUC, British Medical Association, Campaign for Trade Union Freedom, Equity, FBU, GFTU, HCSA, NASUWT, National Education Union, NHS Workers Say No!Also NSSN, PCS, Peace and Justice Project, POA, Psychotherapy and Counselling Union, Royal College of Podiatry, RMT, Security Industry Federation, Strike Map, Troublemakers at work, UCU and We Demand Change.09:06Ben PerrinNew picture of the Megapicket 2 here.Scores of supporters have flooded sites across Birmingham.Megapicket 2 protest 08:39Ben PerrinFormer Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn addressed the crowds at the bin strike ‘megapicket’ in Birmingham this morning.His message to Birmingham City Council was: “Get a deal now, settle this dispute now and pledge yourself to genuine equal pay.”Jeremy Corbyn addresses the crowds at the megapicket 2 in Birmingham on July 25 (Image: BirminghamLive)08:23Ben PerrinKate Taylor, from the NEU, called on the Labour government to do more to support local councils.She said: “Local authorities are in significant financial distress across the country and that is because of significant underfunding."Kate Taylor (Image: BirminghamLive)08:14Ben PerrinSteve Wright FBU general secretary said: “At our recent conference Birmingham Bin Workers joined us. "After hearing from these striking workers we raised £6,500 right there in the room.We are clear that both the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister need to intervene and help end this dispute."We continue to demand that the central government recognises its role in addressing the crisis in local Government funding.” 08:09Ben PerrinThere's a small police presence at this ‘megapicket’ demonstration outside the Atlas depot in Tyseley this morning.Scores of people from across trade unions have come together at five different sites in Birmingham and Coventry today.Police outside the Atlas depot in Tyseley during megapicket 2 on July 25 (Image: BirminghamLive)08:04Ben PerrinGawain Little, from the General Federation of Trade Unions, urged the city council to negotiate with Unite."I think it’s really important that the trade unions have come together to show solidarity with the bin workers," he said.“What’s been done to them is unacceptable."Gawain Little (Image: BirminghamLive)07:56Ben PerrinThe gates at the Tyseley depot are currently closed.It appears no bin lorries are so far leaving the site.07:54Ben PerrinGood morning.Megapicket 2 is in full swing in a coordinated show of unity for Birmingham bin strikers today. Image source, Getty ImagesImage caption, City residents have been taking rubbish to mobile waste collections and tips (image from April 2025)Mountains of rubbish heaped up on pavements and street corners have become a common sight in parts of Birmingham this year as the bin strike rumbles on, amid a dispute between the city council and the Unite union.All-out strike action has been ongoing since March but, while the city's waste-strewn streets led to concerns for public health and queues of up to a mile at mobile collections, talks remained at a stalemate.Six months into the dispute, council leader John Cotton said the authority had "reached the absolute limit" of what it could offer.But why are the strikes happening? Where can people take their rubbish in the meantime? And do residents still have to pay council tax?The dispute initially centred on the council's decision to remove Waste Recycling and Collection Officer (WRCO) roles.The union claimed about 170 affected workers face losing up to £8,000 a year because of the decision, but the council disputed those figures.The local authority said the number of staff that could lose the maximum amount (just over £6,000) was 17 people and they would have pay protection for six months.On-and-off strike action began on 6 January with 12 walkouts planned across four months, but the situation escalated and the union began an indefinite all-out strike on 11 March.Unite also urged the council to guarantee long-term pay for Grade 4 bin lorry drivers as part of its briefings surrounding negotiations.The union had claimed that, under new council plans, bin lorry drivers' pay could fall from £40,000 to £32,000. The council said it was carrying out a "fair and transparent job evaluation process" to comply with equal pay laws.Many bin lorry drivers came out on strike alongside other refuse staff.Media caption, "The stench is thick in the air": Birmingham bin strike leaves streets filled with rubbishThe union said the WRCO role was important because it brought safety expertise to an "often dirty and dangerous job", citing the death of a Coventry bin worker last year.Unite believes removing the role leaves the rest of the workforce "without a fair path for pay progression".The city council said the WRCO role was not industry-standard and did not exist in other councils.The authority also said it was not a role that could be reinstated without opening it up to a potential equal pay liability.The change, the council said, was part of a waste collection service restructure, that aimed to improve the service and comply with the Environmental Act 2021.Media caption, Drone footage shows a lengthy queue for a rubbish collection point in the cityBirmingham City Council declared a major incident on 31 March.Such a declaration is when an event or situation, with a range of serious consequences, requires special arrangements to be carried out by one or more emergency responder agency/agencies, according to the Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme.Birmingham's move to a major incident allowed it to increase the availability of street cleansing and fly-tipping removal, with an extra 35 vehicles and crews.The council can also work with other organisations to better manage risks such as health and fire hazards - and increase sharing of data and intelligence.The authority also said the move allowed officers to explore what further support was available from neighbouring authorities and government.Image source, PA MediaImage caption, On-and-off strikes began in January with all-out action from 11 March (image from March 2025)Conciliation service Acas had mediated negotiations since May, but talks broke down, with council leader Cotton saying the authority was "walking away".A ballot on 14 April had seen the 97% of Unite members who voted reject the latest offer.The council previously said all staff were offered alternative employment at the same pay and almost three-quarters had taken up the offer or opted for voluntary redundancy.As talks broke up, Cotton said the council had negotiated in good faith but the union had rejected all offers and the authority must now "press ahead to both address our equal pay risk and make much needed improvements to the waste service".He also said it would mean waste service staff jobs would be axed, with voluntary redundancy options remaining on the table as well as "opportunities for training and redeployment across the council."After the council said it would be consulting on the future of drivers' roles, Unite general secretary Sharon Graham claimed the council had resorted to a "fire and rehire" strategy.She said bin workers were told to accept lower terms or be made redundant.They have an industrial action mandate until December, Ms Graham added.On 11 July, Unite announced it had suspended Angela Rayner from her membership of the union due to the row and said it would also re-examine its relationship with Labour after an emergency motion at its conference in Brighton.The deputy prime minister has been urging striking bin workers to accept a deal to end the dispute.Image source, Getty ImagesImage caption, Residents living alongside the rubbish have raised concerns about public health (image from April 2025)Throughout the dispute, Birmingham City Council advice to residents has been to put household waste out on normal collection days.If it is not collected, it should be left out and will be collected as soon as the authority is able.Recycling collections were suspended during the action so recycling bins should not be put out, the authority said.Crews will collect "neatly bundled" side waste. Excess waste should be put in black bags, next to household waste bins.The council also suggested residents could take waste to one of its five Household Recycling Centres but said, if that was not possible, residents should keep their recycling until the next opportunity.There is an online system to report a missed collection, external.Image source, Getty ImagesImage caption, General household waste and bulky items can be taken to mobile collections (image from April 2025)There are five Household Recycling Centres in Birmingham where residents can take refuse and recycling.To attend four out of five of them, residents must book a slot, external.They are:Kings Norton, Lifford Lane - open 10:00-22:00 Monday to Friday, and 08:00-18:00 on weekendsPerry Barr, Holford Drive - open 07:00-21:00 Monday to Friday, and 08:00-18:00 on weekendsSutton Coldfield, Norris Way - open 07:00-21:00 Monday to Friday, and 08:00-18:00 on weekendsTyseley, James Road - open 07:00-21:00 Monday to Friday, and 08:00-18:00 on weekendsYou can book no less than two hours before the time you would like to go to the centre and no more than three days before your visit.You can book two visits at a time, which can be on the same day or week.Proof of address must be shown upon arrival to confirm you live in Birmingham.Image source, Getty ImagesImage caption, You can visit a mobile waste collection as many times as you likeBirmingham City Council also has two Mobile Household Waste Centres (MHWCs) visiting all areas of the city.They go to a location for the morning, from 07:30-13:00.You can dispose of household general waste and bulky items at the MHWCs.Waste from vans is not accepted and they have to book a slot at the Household Recycling Centres.You can visit an MHWC as many times as you like. You do not need to book, bring ID or pay for the service.The council updates the locations on its website, external.Items accepted at MHWCs include household rubbish that cannot be reused and bulky items like toys, furniture and wood.You are not permitted to take building materials, white goods, large items like garage doors or tree stumps and hazardous materials.Image source, Getty ImagesImage caption, Families are having to walk past piles of rubbish every daySome residents who have paid thousands to hire skips to dispose of rubbish said they believed they should get a council tax rebate."It is a legal responsibility to pay council tax and we urge people to continue doing this," the city council said.Tony Travers, a local government expert from the London School of Economics, said while refuse collection was important, it was one of a large number of services provided by the authority and the others were still being provided.He added: "It's not lawful for people to withhold payments to the council for council tax. They are required by law to pay."Those who have paid for a 2025 garden waste subscription service will be refunded automatically.How are you affected by the Birmingham bin strikes? Image caption, Unsightly rubbish piles have become a normal sight on some Birmingham streetsStudent Theo Charlton just cannot believe the "apocalyptic" piles of rubbish that he has seen outside his student housing in the UK's second largest city.With the stench of rotting waste thick in the air, the 21-year-old is concerned whether the rubbish from students moving out will get collected.Six months since bin strike action began in Birmingham, there is no getting away from it for people living in the city.Pamela Pritchard, from Great Barr, told the BBC she had not been transporting her recycling to the local tip "out of principle", with the 68-year-old storing it inside her home. In further strike action, kerbside green waste and recycling collections have been suspended.Birmingham City Council said it remained committed to resolving the dispute despite its recycling rate of 22.9 % being the lowest of any unitary authority in the country, with the exception of Liverpool.Image caption, Pamela Pritchard, 68, has been storing her recycling inside her home since the bin strikes beganMembers of the Unite union walked out in January over plans to downgrade some roles as part of the city council's attempts to sort out its equal pay liabilities.An all-out indefinite strike was announced in March and a deal to end industrial action has not yet been reached. Ms Pritchard told the BBC she had been collecting her recycling rubbish and storing it indoors since the strike began. Among the growing piles of neatly stored cardboard, papers and blister packs, she said if the strike went on any longer, she would "learn to live with it". She said: "I don't drive. On principle I refuse to allow my friends to use their time to take my rubbish to the tip, so I've left it in the house."I've always been a keen recycler and I hate wasted resources. "[If the strike continues] I'll find somewhere else, I'll store it in the shed I'll ask a friend - I'll find a home for it."Image caption, There has been no recycling collections since the start of the all-out strike in MarchAt his home in Selly Oak, a hub for student housing, Mr Charlton told the BBC that when students moved out for the summer, mountains of rubbish were left behind. "The other day I was looking at everyone moving out and it was apocalyptic the amount of rubbish [they left behind]," he said."People don't prepare for leaving, they just dump so much stuff. I thought to myself, 'that's going to be there for ages, it's not going to get collected'."The 21-year-old said that, as he did not drive, he was unable to get to a recycling point.Image caption, Theo Charlton (left), and Dan Savill (right) told the BBC students moving out in Selly Oak have left 'apocalyptic' rubbish pilesFellow student Dan Savill echoed the concerns. The 20-year-old, who is moving in to the house for his final year, said he was still making an effort to separate his recycling, even though the collections had been "selective". He also said that as recycling was not being collected, people were putting that rubbish in with the black bin collections."There's rubbish in both bins not being taken. The priority at this point should be taking everything somewhere. Ideally recycling - but all of the general waste should be gone first."Image caption, After six months, residents are no clearer as to when the strike will endCouncillor Izzy Knowles said people living in flats in Moseley had little to no recycling facilities."The recycling is totally full up. It's getting contaminated. [Some] don't have cars, even if they go to the tip they're not allowed in as pedestrians."The Liberal Democrat councillor said the council should be organising recycling trucks and garden waste trucks at mobile household waste centres. Image caption, Councillor Izzy Knowles said people living in flats in Moseley have limited recycling facilities already - and have nowhere left to put their rubbish Birmingham City Council said it was focused on delivering a "transformation" of waste collection services which would boost their recycling rates. If it does not meet the government's target rate of 65% by 2035, it could face a reduction in grant funding. Councillor Majid Mahmood said: "This is a service that needs to be transformed to one that citizens of Birmingham deserve."The council remains committed to resolving the industrial action in the best interest of all parties involved."Tell us which stories we should cover in Birmingham and the Black Country Protestors support bin workers at Lifford Lane depot rally (Image: Adam Yousef)Birmingham City Council and the bins union Unite remain at loggerheads as the all-out strike blighting the city enters its tenth week.Dispute negotiations are said to be ongoing amid claims truck drivers are being drafted in from neighbouring authorities to plug gaps as more staff allegedly 'walk out', with bin truck drivers leading a new exodus.But today the council reported that disruption experienced last week had now eased and all three depots in the city - Atlas in Tyseley, Perry Barr and Lifford Lane in Kings Norton - were operating as normal after they brought in support from neighbouring local authorities, including Coventry, which has been embroiled in its own dispute with Unite.READ MORE: 'We could stay on strike all summer' - defiant bin workers face down councilA 'mega picket' attracted up to 300 people from around the country during a morning of action on Friday May 9. As a result, the council shut down its Lifford Lane depot in a pre-emptive move to avoid any confrontations.The arbitration and conciliation service Acas is involved in on-going negotiations.There is also increasing frustration the strike has exposed longstanding inequality across the city, with inner city, overcrowded areas hardest hit by flytipping and abandoned rubbish heaps.Other parts of the city can afford to organise private rubbish collections and, where necessary, to store rubbish in gardens, while inner city terraces and flats often dispose of rubbish in black bin bags and communal collection points, not individual wheelie bins.Alexis Paton, director of the Centre for Health and Society at Aston University, said the disparity in the build-up of rubbish in Birmingham was in part due to the fact that richer neighbourhoods could afford private collection.“If you don’t want to join the wait-list for the NHS and you have the money, you can go for a private option. We’re seeing the exact same thing happen with rubbish.”Protestors at the rally outside Lifford Lane depotPaton told the FT the conditions in poorer neighbourhoods were leading to an increase in rodents, infections and access issues for people with disabilities. “We’re starting to see some real inequalities playing out.”Award-winning actor Khalid Abdalla, who played Princess Diana's lover Dodi Fayed in the hit series The Crown, has become the latest name to back the bin workers in their dispute.Based in London, so not directly affected by the impact of the strike, the film and TV star has joined the likes of ex Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and UB40 to back the Birmingham bin workers on strike over pay and jobs.Khalid Abdalla, who played Princess Diana's lover Dodi Fayed in the hit series The Crown, has become the latest name to back the bin workers in their dispute.Abdalla, who has also appeared in Hollywood films United 93, The Kite Runner and Assassin’s Creed, posed for a photo with a hand-drawn poster expressing solidarity with the city’s bin workers during a conference featuring former Labour leader Corbyn.Speaking at the Counterfire ‘Revolution!’ conference in London, Corbyn, now sitting as an independent MP, said: “My message to our colleagues in Birmingham on strike is you’re on strike because the council has reacted to the financial crisis of Birmingham Council by trying to cut your wages and cut your income levels.“You’re on strike defending, what is a very basic thing, the collective agreement you’ve reached on the levels of pay you receive, so you have my support in the strike you’re undertaking and don’t be intimidated.”READ MORE: Whose side are you on in the bin strike? Have your sayUnite members among the city's waste workforce began an all-out strike on March 11 after disputing the city council’s decision to remove Waste Recycling and Collection Officer (WRCO) roles from its bin crews, affecting 170 staff.They are also now battling job evaluation plans that could see bin truck drivers switched to a lower pay grade.Lifford Lane refuse collector Aaron Phipps said he was "devastated" by the situation and how much "financial stress it's caused me and my family at home"."Basically, I came into work one day in January and I was told that I'm going to be losing £400 a month, every month forever, so it wasn't just me who was told that, it was the majority of the workforce, so now we're out here on strike."We're just waiting on negotiations now and it seems like they're taking a hell of a long time. I mean, the sooner they get sorted, the quicker we can get back to work and get this city back up to the standards that it should be."Unite national lead officer Onay Kasab said the strike was about “stopping austerity being imposed on refuse workers”. He described Friday's rally as a way to support workers and defend their pay.Former city councillor and NHS worker Salma Yaqoob also spoke to the crowd, telling them: "This is a battle now. We are seeing huge pay rises for bosses, for senior leaders and [for] the same people saying ‘there is no money, there is no alternative’, but that is a lie.“It’s not just a four-legged rat that Brummies need to be worried about, it’s the two-legged rats that are in the corridors of power, in the Council House and in Parliament, and we are here to say enough is enough!”Protestors support bin workers at Lifford Lane depot rally Last month, Birmingham musicians UB40 gave their backing to the Birmingham bin strikers.Appearing on the BBC's Midlands Politics this weekend, Independent MP for Perry Barr, Ayoub Khan, also a city councillor, claimed many thousands of tonnes of rubbish were still on the streets, while no recycling was taking place."What [striking bin workers] are saying is very simple: 'We've got mortgages to pay, we've got children to raise. The cost of living is going through the roof and we just want a fair deal.'"While council opposition leader Cllr Robert Alden, Cons, Erdington, claimed rubbish was building up again because of the lack of trucks on the streets.The council previously said it had no choice but to eliminate the WRCO role because of its implications in equal pay issues, and that the job evaluation exercise being carried out across the council workforce had involved all three trade unions, including Unite. The others are GMB and Unison.We have reached out to the union and council for strike negotiation updates. A West Midlands Police officer in Tyseley, amid the ongoing bin strikes(Image: Jacob King/PA Wire)There has been no breakthrough in talks between Birmingham City Council and Unite the union representing striking Birmingham bin workers this week, BirminghamLive understands.Unite had expected to receive a potential pay offer, via the independent conciliation service ACAS, yesterday, Tuesday, May 27, so they could ballot members.However, no new offer arrived and no update is now expected until Friday, May 30, at the earliest.READ MORE: Birmingham bin strike costs taxpayer nearly £1m to fund policing at picket linesThe continuous strike - over pay and conditions - started on March 11.The council later declared a major incident after 17,000-tonnes of rubbish were left uncollected on the city's streets. Now a current clear up is on to remove more than 12,000-tonnes of waste.Police officers on hand as members of Unite go on the picket line at Birmingham City Council's Atlas Depot in Tyseley(Image: Matthew Cooper/PA Wire)BirminghamLive revealed today that is has cost the taxpayer almost £1m to fund policing numbers at picket lines. Almost 1,800 West Midlands Police officers have been deployed to three city waste depots over 11-weeks.The council said that all of its available waste wagons were deployed from its depots at Atlas, in Tyseley, Lifford Lane, in Kings Norton, and Perry Barr today, Wednesday, May 28.It also reminded residents that recycling collections are still suspended. It said "please don’t" burn your recycling or household waste and instead take it to a household recycling centre "if you can."In a waste update, the council posted on X: "Wednesday 28 May: All of our available waste wagons have been deployed from our three depots citywide this morning."Please put your household waste bin (grey lid) out on your scheduled day. If not collected, please leave bins out and crews will attend asap."It later said: "Recycling collections are still suspended. Please don’t burn your recycling, or household waste."If you can, take your recycling to a Household Recycling Centre. Or store it safely at home For advice, follow the link in the comments."Black sacks and other rubbish piles up in Balsall Heath during the bin strike.(Image: Anita Maric/SWNS)Unite general secretary Sharon Graham told BirminghamLive: “The actions of Birmingham City Council and the government commissioners have been a costly shambles."First of all, they have tried to make bin workers’ pay for their bad decisions by attempting to make pay cuts of up to £8,000.“Now we hear that they have not only thrown money away on agency labour, clean-up costs and expensive legal challenges but their incompetence has also led to £850,000 wasted on policing picket lines.“Meanwhile, the bin workers are still waiting for the ‘fair and reasonable offer’ that they have been urged to accept by Angela Rayner and council leader, John Cotton. It is little wonder that Birmingham residents and the workers are now questioning whose side Labour is on.”The city council was granted an interim injunction to ensure that the picketing and protesting behaviour outside of the council’s three depots is in accordance with legal provisions from Friday, May 23.This has seen picketers standing in front of waste wagons and use go-slow tactics to disrupt vehicles leaving depots due to depart to make collections. The injunction is currently in place until Thursday, May 29. Responding to an urgent question from Conservative shadow minister Kevin Hollinrake, McMahon on Tuesday urged the union to accept a council offer."The industrial action is in no one's interest because the deal on the table is a good deal," he said. "The government will continue to be on the side of the people of Birmingham and to support the council into creating a sustainable, a fair and a reliable waste service that its residents deserve."Judith Whalley, who uses a mobility scooter, lives in Hockley, an area where residents do not have wheelie bins due to the layout of the houses.In previous weeks, bags had been piled waist-high, she said, but asked what it was like in Hockley now, the resident stated "it's a lot better". She told BBC Radio WM: "They've been taking our bags away and in fact there were two men.... on Sunday who were with small, not bin lorries, with small wagons with the metal sides. "They were taking away the rubbish and sweeping up, clearing up extremely well."Lorraine Boyce, from West Heath, said: "Yesterday I think I did see a definite improvement."I saw several trucks around. There were less piles of rubbish... But nevertheless we've still got weeks and weeks of recyling." In a recent statement, external, Unite said a deal "would be much closer" if promises made by the council in interviews were put in writing.John Cotton, leader of Birmingham City Council, previously said he was keen the two parties continued talking so they could bring the dispute to a close. Image source, EPAImage caption, Mountains of rubbish piling up on Birmingham's streets became a common sightA long-running strike by bin workers in Birmingham could last until December, according to union Unite, after members voted to continue industrial action in a dispute over pay and jobs.The union said on Wednesday that 97% of those who voted backed continued strike action, on a 75% turnout."The decision makers at Birmingham council need to get in the room and put forward an acceptable offer," said Unite general secretary Sharon Graham, warning strikes would continue for "as long as it takes".A Birmingham City Council spokesperson said it had made a "fair and reasonable offer" and that it remained committed to resolving the dispute.It added that it had urged the union to put that offer to its members.However, Ms Graham said: "After smearing these workers in public since January and telling them to accept a fair and reasonable offer that never existed, the council finally put a proposal in writing last week."True to form, the proposal came weeks late and was not in line with the ballpark offer discussed during Acas talks in May."Last week Ms Graham claimed the deal had been watered down - a point denied by the council.Image source, PA MediaImage caption, On-and-off strikes began in January with all-out action from 11 MarchA spokesperson for the Labour-run local authority said the bin collection service needed to be transformed "to one that citizens of Birmingham deserve"."We have made a fair and reasonable offer that we have asked Unite to put to their members and we are awaiting their response," they said.The ballot was not a response to the latest offer made through the conciliation service Acas, they added.On-and-off strike action began on 6 January with 12 walkouts planned across four months, and the union began an indefinite all-out strike on 11 March.Talks have been held under the chairmanship of Acas, but the dispute has remained in deadlock.UK law requires unions to reballot their members every six months to continue industrial action, meaning the current vote gives permission for strikes up until December.Mountains of rubbish heaped up on the city's streets in March and April, and led to concerns over public health - at the same time there were queues of up to a mile at some mobile collection points as residents tried to get rid of their waste.The city is currently affected by strike action five days a week, from Monday to Friday, continuously.Image source, PA MediaImage caption, Long queues built up outside recycling centres in AprilThe dispute initially centred on the council's decision to remove Waste Recycling and Collection Officer (WRCO) roles but escalated amid anger over an alleged move by the local authority to hire temporary labour which the union claimed would "undermine" the walkouts.The union claimed about 170 workers faced losing up to £8,000 a year - but the council disputed the figures.The local authority claimed the number of staff that could have lost the maximum amount of just over £6,000 was 17 people, and they would have pay protection for six months.The dispute has since grown to include issues over the long-term pay of bin lorry drivers.In April, the union said, under new council plans, drivers' pay could also fall from £40,000 to £32,000.The council said it was carrying out a "fair and transparent job evaluation process" agreed with trade unions, to comply with equal pay laws.A spokesperson for Acas said: "We recognise the challenges on all sides and the desire to find a resolution, and we stand ready to offer our support."Image source, PA MediaImage caption, A so-called mega-picket was held in support of bin workers a month ago Industrial disputes are by their very nature difficult to resolve. Agreement can and does take time, and there is of course a necessity for the two sides to find common ground. As we enter the fourth month of all-out strike action in Birmingham, what is becoming increasingly apparent is that neither side feels it has much ground to give.The union says its members facing cuts to pay are being asked to make sacrifices that they as individuals cannot afford. Their determination is apparent in the outcome of this ballot.At the same time, the council says there are limits to what it can offer and that for the most part, are not about money.The reorganisation of the service which prompted the dispute centres on the authority's long-standing problem with equal pay claims.Claims made by female council staff on the same job grades elsewhere in the authority have already cost over £1bn and were one of the main drivers of the council effectively going bankrupt in 2023. This loss must be stemmed says the council, and so there are limits to what can be negotiated under the new pay grades or it says it risks falling into the same legal quagmire.Further talks involving Acas are due to take place in the coming days. This ballot does not mean industrial action will continue until Christmas, but it means it is possible, and Unite will believe it hands its negotiators the strongest possible hand in those talks.Tell us which stories we should cover in Birmingham and the Black CountryBirminghamBirmingham City CouncilUnite

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