

NEW ROUND OF LOCAL GOVT PENSION NEGOTIATIONS GET UNDERWAY

During last year the government put forward radical proposals to seriously reduce the value of public sector pensions and to make members pay 50% more for the privilege. These proposals were intended to apply to the LGPS which GMB and others strongly opposed and which led to the successful strike on 30th November.

Government finally relented and said that for local government the TUs and council leaders could negotiate a new way forward. We jointly put forward a set of principles that were eventually accepted fully by government. So the agreed way forward is that the previous government proposals are set aside while we renegotiate.

The new round of negotiations got underway yesterday but unfortunately one union, Unite, decided to pull out. I genuinely don't understand why and we will miss their support at the negotiating table. Nevertheless I am absolutely clear that we must stick to our task to negotiate the best set of proposals that we can. Therefore GMB and the other local government unions have agreed to continue negotiations without Unite. GMB and Unison will lead those negotiations on behalf of all LGPS members.

This new set of negotiations will be intensive and difficult. There is no doubt that the LGPS is a sound, sustainable scheme - there is equally no doubt that government wants to make it cheaper for taxpayers. That's why we will be negotiating hard to protect the interests of all members of the scheme.

I expect the new negotiations will conclude in February/March to allow for consultation with members in March/April.

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GMB is clear that it is my job to negotiate the best offer we can secure but it will be for members to decide whether final proposals are acceptable or not.

I will, of course, keep you informed of the progress of the negotiations.

Brian Strutton

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