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Local Government Pension Scheme Supplementary Press Release

Further to our Press Release sent on 7 October 2011 please find supplementary information.

As the result of changes that UNISON negotiated under the last labour government in 2008, projected costs to employers of the LGPS have already been cut by billions. This was a new, secure affordable scheme. The Treasury now want to “save” another £900 million a year.

The government imposed an extremely tight timetable on the local government employers and the unions to come up with the proposals and to make the £900 million savings. There is a widely held view that the timetable is unrealistic and unnecessary as it simply does not give enough time for safe and considered decisions to be made.

The trade unions asked that adequate time is given to examine all possible options, commission research and look in depth at the outcome of the 2010 Local Government Pension Scheme evaluations (which are undertaken on a 3 year basis) to be able to make sound and prudent judgments about possible changes.

For most public services this will mean workers will have to pay more out of their salary each year, work longer before they can claim their full pension and get less pension income when they are retired. It's important to understand that none of the extra contributions of “savings” generated by these changes will go towards improving anyone's pension.

The value of future pensions has been cut around 15% by changing the way inflation is measured from the Retail Price Index to Consumer Price Index. UNISON is seeking a judicial review of this decision.

There is also a plan to end the “fair deal” negotiated in 1999, which protects workers whose jobs are privatised as it means private sector employers have to provide a pension scheme which is comparable.

UNISON remains willing to continue with the talks. The decision to ballot for Industrial Action has not been taken lightly.

ENDS.