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Issue No.2

TIME TO TAKE A STAND

As UNISON starts our major recruitment drive, this bulletin updates you on the next steps in our campaign for a fair deal on pay for local government workers. ***Make sure you tell your workmates that UNISON is leading the fight to get them the pay rise they deserve and get those not in the union to join.*** There are new recruitment forms to help you boost our numbers available from your UNISON branch or on the UNISON website.

In Pay Matters 1 we outlined the employers' NJC pay "offer" and gave you some of the reasons why UNISON's NJC Committee voted unanimously to reject it when it met on 27 February. The Committee believes that neither 1% with 'strings' or the 'punishment option' of 1% for employees on scale points 4-10 and 0.6% for everyone else come anywhere near what you need - or deserve.

18% OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY LOST SINCE 2010

We have done up-to-the-minute calculations on how much pay you have lost since 2010 when the Coalition took power and the employers stopped giving you pay rises. ***It's a massive 18% when inflation is taken into account!!*** But while you have lost almost 1/5 of your earnings, 260,000 jobs have 'gone' from local government with redundancies and/or deletion of frozen posts. It's you and local government workers like you who have filled the gaps and kept services going – with no thanks from the Coalition government which has slashed council budgets - or from the employers.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

UNISON's NJC Committee will meet on Friday, 15 March to discuss the next steps in our Pay Matters campaign. We will be meeting GMB and Unite representatives in the Joint Trade Union Side following our own meeting and will be aiming to get agreement between the three unions on the next steps and a joint campaign.

All three unions want the employers to see sense and return to negotiations quickly with a substantially improved offer. We believe that they can afford it and that many councils want to pay more...The total amount spent on pay has been falling for some years, while most councils have been putting money into reserves. Between 2011 and 2012, the pay bill fell by over 10%, on top of a similar drop between 2010 and 2011. There will have been a further fall since April 2012 too. Councils have saved huge amounts of money, while you have been working harder and harder.

YOU WILL BE CONSULTED...

UNISON will consult you over the current offer – or any improved one. This consultation will be carried out by your UNISON branch. We will be asking you whether you accept or reject the offer and whether you will be prepared to take strike action or other forms of industrial action to get a better one if you think it is not good enough. ***UNISON branches will consult members using the same questions, to the same timetable. We will allow enough time for you to hear the arguments and make your mind up.*** We will let you know the consultation timetable – once agreed - in a Pay Matters bulletin.

If the offer is rejected and there is a clear 'yes' vote for industrial action, we will ask UNISON's Industrial Action Committee to approve a formal ballot for industrial action under our union's rules.

CAMPAIGNING TO TAKE A STAND

UNISON's campaign for a pay offer you deserve and which councils can afford will be hotting up in the next couple of weeks. This week we will be sending an e-mail to all councillors and council Leaders, telling them what the employers have offered and urging them to call for an improved offer. We will also be getting leaflets and posters printed and providing branches and Regions with a PowerPoint presentation and briefings for stewards on the offer – and why it's not good enough. You will soon be able to send a letter direct to your MP from the UNISON web site too, explaining why you need a decent pay rise.

We are also setting up a Pay Matters Facebook page, which will carry up-to-date information, facts and figures and campaign ideas. We hope that it will be ready this week.

KEEP UP THE PRESSURE

We know that many of you feel under pressure because of the threat of redundancies and further cuts. Public opinion is turning against the Coalition government on their 'austerity' measures and if we stand together – locally and across the UK – we can have a huge impact. Almost 2 million local government workers are a real force to be reckoned with!!

So please talk to your colleagues at work and your friends and families and let them know why UNISON is taking a stand. ***And don't forget to get non-members to join us...in UNISON...for a fair deal on local government pay***