



## Press Cutting

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### Council staff risk being 'dragged' into autumn pension strikes

*Jonathan Werran*

**Failure to secure agreement over reforms to the local government pension scheme (LGPS) could result in council staff being 'dragged' into mass walkouts this autumn, a leading trade union official has warned.**

Speaking at a symposium addressing the future of the LGPS, Brian Strutton, national secretary for public services for the GMB, said he remained confident that the 'circle can be squared' with local government employers and agreement reached on making enormous cost savings to the scheme.

Describing his union's approach as a 'pragmatic one' he argued the local government schemes should be dealt with in the round and more quickly than the other, unfunded public sector schemes.

Commenting on the separate scheme talks, Mr Strutton said: 'All the reports from them are entirely negative, and the predictions are for further industrial action, probably in November - and not just who went on strike in June, but a much wider spectrum of all public sector workers. There is a risk of us being dragged into that.'

Ministers have set a strict timetable to agree proposals for pensions reform. By 9 September employers led by the LGA and unions are expected to submit a package of measures to Eric Pickles outlining how they would make the cost-savings. The DCLG will then enter into a statutory 12-week consultation period in order to affect the changes from April 2012.

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LGA Chair Sir Merrick Cockell, who joined the panel organised by the London Pension Fund Authority, said although talks had been constructive and held in a good spirit agreement is still yet to be reached between employers and unions.

Expressing his dislike for the proposed single act, set to be passed by legislation next year, he dismissed it as an 'overarching' attempt by Treasury to exert ever more control over local government