

Our Barnet

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UNIONS STRIKE ON 30 NOVEMBER

WE WANT GOOD PENSIONS FOR ALL!

Wednesday 30 November **PENSIONS MARCH AND RALLY**

**March: 1pm from Lincoln's Inn Fields.
Rally: 2pm, Victoria Embankment.
Barnet contingent meets 10.30am,
Finchley Central/Golders Green tube
or 12 noon, Cochrane Theatre,
Southampton Row, WCI.
March organised by South East Region TUC**

The unions striking on 30 November to defend their members' pensions represent public sector workers: council workers, nurses and other health workers, teachers and other education workers...

The Government wants to force the state's own employees to work longer, receive a smaller pension and make larger personal contributions to that pension. This is a massive attack on public sector workers' living standards now and in the future.

The Government has tried to portray public sector workers as greedy, enjoying a lavish, "gold-plated" pension, funded by workers in the private sector or those with no job at all.

In fact, public sector pensions are not lavish. The median payment for a public sector pension is £5,600 a year: just over £100 per week.

And there is no crisis in funding the schemes. In 2010 the Government asked Lord Hutton to look into public sector pensions and assess their sustainability. Hutton found that their cost is falling over the long term. Their value today is

1.9% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP – the market value of all goods and services produced within a country); by 2060 it will have fallen to 1.4% of GDP.

So why is the Government doing this? The Civil Service union PCS describes the attack on pensions as "a tax on public sector workers to pay for the mess made by the banks".

Cutting pensions also makes it more attractive to private sector companies to take on the delivery of public services: it is part of the Government's privatisation agenda.

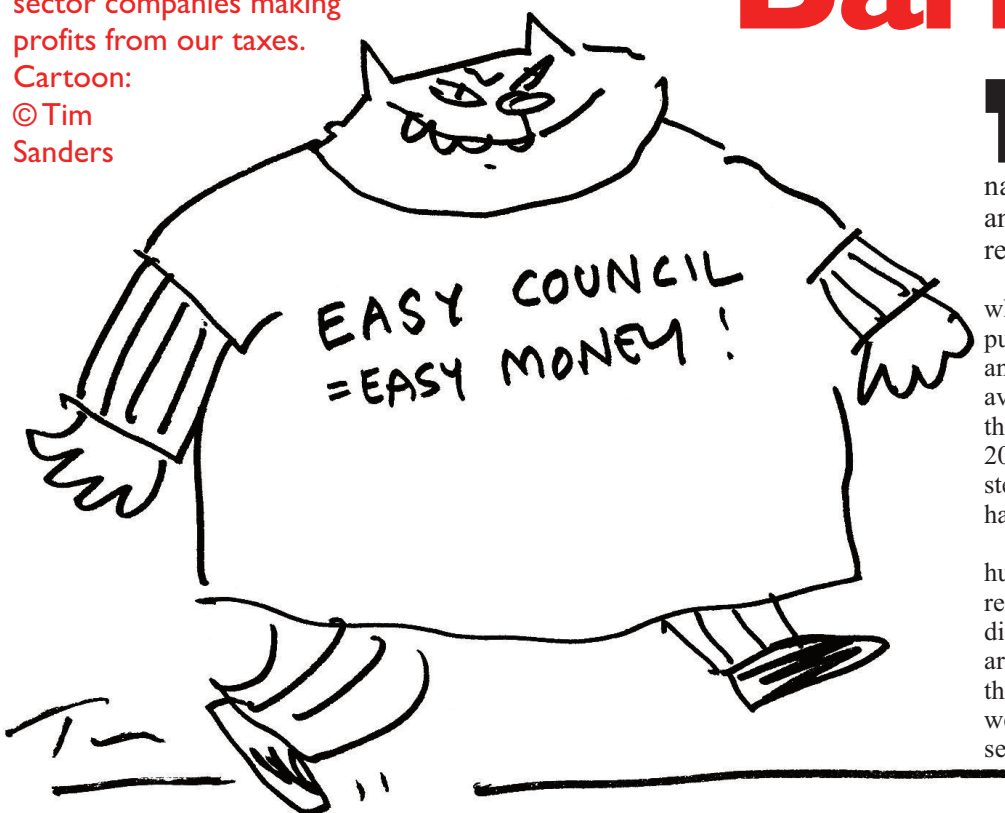
Pensions in the private sector are generally worse than in the public sector. Important among the reasons for this is the relative weakness of trade unionism in the private sector.

Unions such as Unite represent workers in both public and private sectors. They know that the answer to the problem of poor private sector pensions is to raise them closer to public sector pensions, not push public sector pensions down!

Workers in the public and private sectors are right to fight for good occupational pensions. We also need a better state pension. We want good pensions for all!

The One Barnet Programme would result in big private sector companies making profits from our taxes.

Cartoon:
© Tim Sanders



Barnet 2012: what lies ahead?

The next year will be grim for the global and national economy, and for many Barnet residents too.

Barnet Alliance for Public Services (BAPS) who publish this newspaper don't believe that public services should be cut in order to "balance the books". There are many alternatives available to the Government, including forcing the bankers who caused the financial crisis of 2008 to bear more of the national burden. Instead, banks are being allowed to carry on behaving much as they have done in the past.

Multinational companies continue to make huge profits while avoiding paying tax. Barnet residents and Council workers have reason to distrust companies such as Capita and BT, who are bidding to run our public services as part of the One Barnet Programme. Under One Barnet we will lose control over how services are run, see standards decline, and, if any of the con-

tracts fail, pick up the tab for sorting out the mess.

Barnet Council workers transferred to the private sector face cuts to pay and employment conditions, and could even lose their jobs.

The Council budget in March 2012 is likely to include £43 million cuts for 2012/15, to add to cuts already made this year. There will be more "efficiencies" and job losses, worse services, and higher charges, such as the hated rises in parking charges, and the devastating charges for adult social care.

None of this is inevitable. However, we will have to organise to debate the alternatives, get our voices heard, and make a difference.

Join BAPS as we campaign to defend our public services!

**Tuesday 29 November, join us in Edgware for the next
"OUR BARNET" residents' forum**

See back page for details