



tubeworker

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PAY OFFER: VOTE TO REJECT!

All four unions are recommending that we accept LU's latest pay and conditions offer, but *Tubeworker* recommends voting to **REJECT** it. The offer is 5% (ie. RPI minus 0.5%) this year, followed by RPI+0.5% (minimum 2%) for the next three years.

The main reason we should reject this is that it is too long. *Signing up to a four-year deal would be a big mistake.*

It means setting aside important demands until 2015. Once again, under this offer there is no flat-rate minimum to benefit lower-paid grades, so for the next four years, grades that are already better-paid would get bigger pay rises. And we would stay on a five-day, 35-hour week despite the standard for drivers on the mainline railway being a four-day week.

Our workload is getting heavier and our hours more anti-social, but if we accept this offer, we will have no scope to demand pay rises or cuts in hours that reflect that.

A four-year deal would mean putting away one of our best weapons for an all-grades battle over a period when LU will be trying to make further job cuts. These job cuts will come one grade at a time, and it could be tough to pull together an all-grades fight. A pay and conditions fight would give us the chance to do that, but if we are tied into a four-year deal, that will not be an option.

Signing up to a long pay deal clears management's decks to attack our jobs and conditions. *You only have to ask yourself why management are so determined to get a long-term pay deal to work out why it is such a bad idea.*

A second reason is that the money for this year is not good enough. Although 5% sounds OK, it is less than February RPI,

so is in effect a pay cut - our income will not keep pace with our outgoings.

Workers' cost of living has increased greatly this year. The ConDem government wasted no time at the start of the year in raising VAT to 20%. Grocery bills, housing costs, childcare and utilities have all gone up.

This sets a dangerous precedent for the future. If we accept a below-inflation offer now, then after this deal expires and we go back for a new one, why would management start off with RPI as a baseline figure?!

We are often told we should be grateful for 5% because other workers are receiving less. But those workers are not helped by us accepting less than we could win.

In any case, our workmates in other London Transport companies have received more than 5% this year. TfL staff received 6%; TubeLines 5.6%; DLR 5.3%; and London Overground 6.25%.

And while our bosses are whining that this is all they can afford they are claiming top salaries for themselves - Peter Hendy, Commissioner for TfL is on £332,276 per year; Steve Allen, Managing Director of Finance is on £268,982; and Mike Brown, LU Managing Director gets £285,230.

A meeting of RMT reps voted that the union should hold a referendum recommending acceptance. *Tubeworker* supporters in the meeting argued and voted against recommending acceptance.

Despite several others also arguing this

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view, most reps felt that there was not the mood amongst staff for an immediate fight on this issue. But that mood to fight might be there if we build it up, and it might be there next year, or the year after, or the year after that. A four-year deal means we can not fight over pay and conditions again until 2015.

Once again, pay talks have dragged on so long that the pressure of Christmas tempts people to accept a substandard deal. Sometimes, letting the pay issue drag on looks like a clever strategy, but it rarely turns out that way in practice. But having dragged it out, we should not now chuck it in.

With the Olympics coming, we have a chance to pressure LU into giving us the sort of pay and conditions deal that *we* want. Not only do the union leaderships want us to abandon that chance, they also want us to sign up to a pay deal when we still don't have an acceptable offer for the Olympics themselves. It is vital to include all grades in all companies so we can win a decent deal for everybody from drivers to cleaners.

If we accept this deal in haste, we will repent at leisure. And even if members of all unions do vote by a majority to accept the offer, a sizeable vote to Reject will send a strong signal to the unions and the company.

Tubeworker is produced by Tube workers and published by Workers' Liberty, an organisation fighting as part of the labour movement for a socialist alternative to both capitalism and Stalinism, based on common ownership and democracy.

We want one democratic, fighting union for all railworkers. We reject artificial divisions between workers of different grades. We oppose racism, sexism, homophobia and all prejudice that divides us. Only our bosses benefit from a divided workforce.

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