



**20 March 2024**

**Shona Robison MSP**  
**Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance**  
Scottish Government  
St Andrews House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH31 3DG

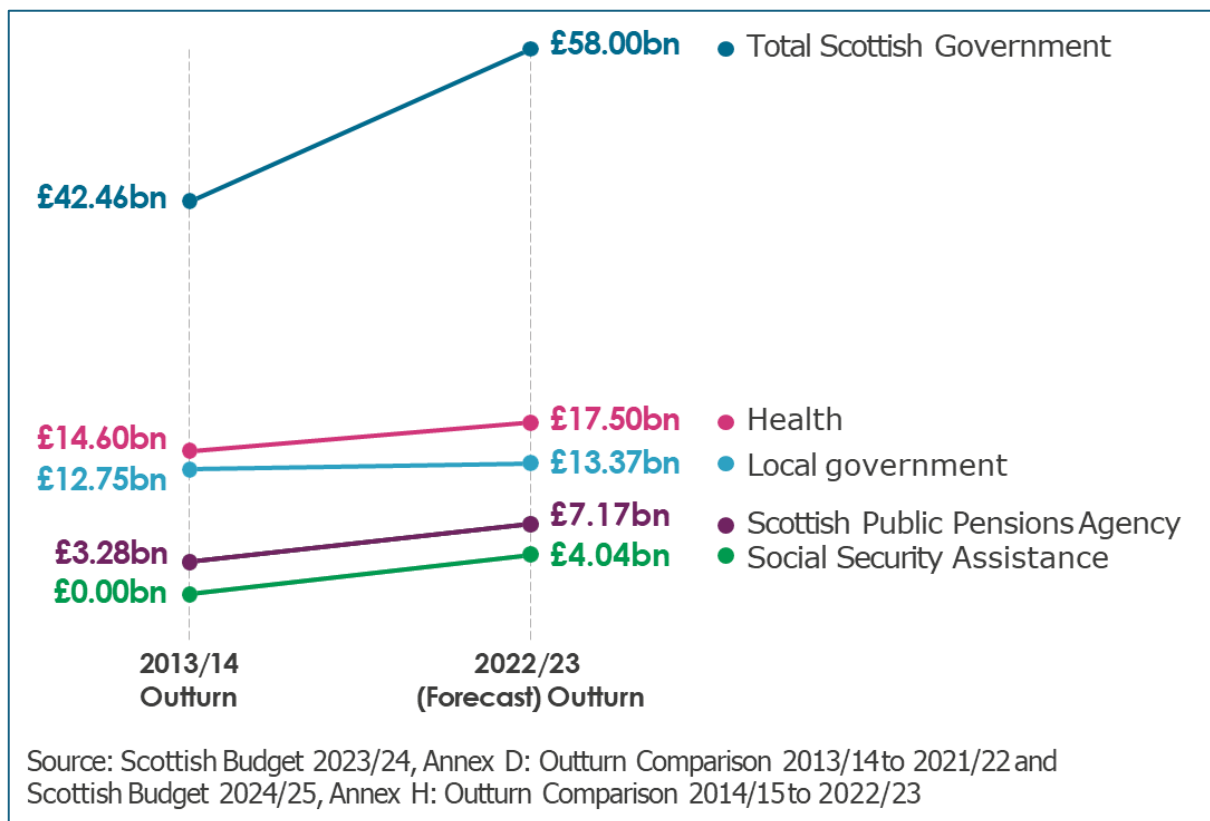
By email - [dfmcsf@gov.scot](mailto:dfmcsf@gov.scot)

Dear Deputy First Minister,

**Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees – Budget and Implications for Funding for Pay Negotiations 2024/25**

As you are aware, Scottish Local Government Pay Claims have now been received for the 2024/25 period. We believe it is important and in everyone's interest to achieve a sustainable settlement on pay at the earliest opportunity, based on the fullest of information available. Scottish Local Government settlements must be sustainable alongside the significant budget challenges facing councils and it is vital that the approach to our workforce/members is fair, acknowledging the essential front-line services that are delivered every day.

Local Government is facing a cut in real terms to both core revenue and capital budgets. As a proportion of funding allocated to the Scottish Budget, the percentage for local government has declined. Local Government professional advisers have provided the following graphical comparison from the Local Government in Scotland Financial Bulletin 2022/23 (Accounts Commission):



It is clear to us, as employers and unions representing the workforce that funding levels for councils have not kept pace with increased demand for services. This is impacted by both the growing need of services due to demographic pressures and the ongoing cost of living crisis.

These financial challenges have coincided with new burdens and additional policy commitments, for example, delivering 1140 hours of early learning and maintaining teacher numbers. We note that in recent years funding for many commitments has been being ring fenced and has not always been raised in line with rising pay, forcing councils to take savings from non-statutory services, with some being significantly reduced, or stopping altogether.

Councils are also reporting increased pressures on maintaining service delivery, because of workforce recruitment and retention issues. The scale of the problem is growing, and employee shortages are being felt to varying degrees across all services, largely driven by competition from other sectors related to the ability to maintain fair and competitive pay both locally and nationally.

Council staff play a vital role in delivering front-line essential services that are highly visible and valued by citizens across all of our communities every single day. It is

only through the extraordinary efforts of our workforce/members that we continue to deliver highly valued Local Government services, against an increasingly challenging financial backdrop.

Importantly, and respecting the Verity House agreement, although we are writing to you jointly, we are not asking Scottish Government to intervene directly in our pay negotiations. We agree that these negotiations are solely the responsibility of Local Government. However, we wish to emphasize the grave concerns around funding, that are shared by Council Leaders and Councils as the employer and the Unions that represent the Local Government workforce.

In conclusion, we are jointly writing to you to request that sufficient funding is made available so that, alongside the other financial commitments faced by Councils, our pay negotiations may be concluded quickly and amicably, with a pay deal that is fair, equitable and sustainable, and ensures pay parity across all groups.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Katie Hagmann,  
COSLA Resources Spokesperson



Simon MacFarlane,  
Interim Lead Organiser, UNISON



Graham McNab,  
Regional Officer, UNITE



Keir Greenway,  
GMB Scotland Senior Organiser