



To: Derek Mackay MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution
From: SJC Trade Union Joint Secretaries
Date: 15th May 2018
Subject: COSLA Pay Offer

- Sent by e-mail -

Dear Derek,

We write further to our meeting with you on 10th May, regarding the COSLA pay offer for local government workers.

Thank you for meeting with us - we appreciated the opportunity to talk with you directly about the concerns our members have with local government funding and the consequential impact on this year's pay negotiations with COSLA.

There were a number of issues raised during our discussion that we thought would be useful to follow up with you:

Funding of local government

You will be aware from our previous correspondence and our discussions that we remain concerned about the level of funding provided to local authorities by your government.

COSLA have consistently stated to us that they need £545m just to 'stand still'. In our discussions you stated that this might be what they would need in 'an ideal world' and that COSLA had not in fact requested this money from the Scottish Government.

Our understanding is that COSLA's figures take account of demographic changes to their workforce and that they continue to dispute the figures quoted by the Scottish Government in terms of funding received to date and that which they still need to provide an improvement to the current pay offer.

If it is indeed the case that COSLA have not requested £545m we would be grateful if you could confirm for us what figure they have requested and how the monies already provided to them to date take account of workforce changes and pay pressures.

Public Sector Pay Policy

Much of our discussion focused on the terms and application of your public sector pay policy.

Whilst you state that there has been no variation to the public sector pay policy we drew your attention to the news that Civil Servants are to receive 4% uplift as part of their settlement

(see <https://www.civilserviceworld.com/articles/news/scottish-civil-servants-offered-4-rise-%E2%80%98departure-austerity-pay%E2%80%99#.Wuwjpcgnmf0.twitter>). You stated that this offer has been misrepresented in the media and that in fact there has been no deviation from the published policy – if this is the case we would be grateful if you could provide a breakdown of this offer and how it complies with the current public sector pay policy.

We would be also be grateful if you could also provide us with information on how the Scottish Police Authority, Scottish Children’s Reporter Service and Prison Officers offers compare with the current public sector pay policy.

Additionally, we drew your attention to the 1.4% GDP deflator figure stated in the public sector pay policy. We believe this under estimates the cost of implementing this policy by about half (given that inflation is currently running at double that estimate) and asked where this figure had come from. You stated that you would get us further information on this and we look forward to receiving that.

Equity/Parity Across The Local Government Bargaining Groups

Our understanding is that you remain in discussion with Teachers and their representatives and that you are ‘mindful’ of the Deputy First Minister’s priorities with regards to the Government’s Education agenda. None of our members would dispute the value of a good quality education but, as we pointed out in our discussions, our members are key to delivering that – our classroom assistants, janitors and early years workers are just as valuable, and play as significant a part, in children’s education as teachers and deserve to be rewarded appropriately.

You will appreciate that our members, who deliver a valuable public service to communities up and down the country, simply want to ensure that they are treated equitably with other hard working public servants and so again we must press you on the issue of parity across the local government bargaining groups.

Consolidation of the Living Wage

We made the point in our discussions that, despite an agreement to do so, COSLA have not yet consolidated the living wage for our lowest paid members. We would ask you to investigate whether this is the case in other public service bodies. We know that the living wage has been consolidated in the NHS for some time now and would ask why local government yet again seems to lag behind in the protection of our most vulnerable workers.

Next Steps

We hope that you will be able to come back to us on these issues and thank you for your offer of a further meeting.

We look forward to meeting again in the near future and look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Johanna Baxter
SJC Joint Secretary
UNISON

Drew Duffy
SJC Joint Secretary
GMB

Willie McGonigle
SJC Joint Secretary
UNITE