



Dear Member,

### **UPDATE - Local Government Pay**

UNISON have been working hard to secure an improvement to the current pay offer put forward by COSLA. This briefing is to bring you up to date with this activity, to outline our next steps in trying to secure you a decent pay rise and let you know what you can do to help the campaign. (Links to copies of all of the correspondence referred to in this update can be found at the bottom of this mailing.)

### **RECAP - The Current Offer**

As you know the offer put forward by COSLA was the same offer made to all four bargaining groups in Local Government – so the same offer as that made to Teachers, Craft Workers and Chief Officials. Whilst the employer termed this is a best and final offer we discovered that they had, at the same time as sending this to us, also written to the Scottish Government pressing for parity across the bargaining groups and asking that if the Scottish Government was so minded to give any one group of workers a higher increase than this that they provide the necessary funding to ensure that this extends to all Local Government bargaining groups.

### **Representations to the Scottish Government**

It was against this background that the Joint Scottish Joint Council (SJC) Trade Unions agreed that we should 'note' the employers offer, their representations to the Scottish Government and that we should make our own representations to the Scottish Government in pursuit of our full claim. This position was put to the employer verbally and in writing on the 28<sup>th</sup> March and we wrote jointly to Derek Mackay MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution, pressing the issue of parity and calling for additional funding for COSLA to deliver an increase which addressed both the cost of living and an element of restoration. The objective in doing both of these things was two-fold - to call on the Scottish Government to provide COSLA with additional funding to meet our claim and to keep the employer at the negotiating table.

We received a response from the Cabinet Secretary's office on the 25<sup>th</sup> April – you can read a copy

of that [here](#). It is fair to say that this did not address the concerns outlined in our initial correspondence and we therefore wrote to him again pressing these points further – you can read a copy of that letter [here](#). That further letter seemed to touch a nerve as we received by, almost immediate, return an invitation to meet with Derek Mackay MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution. Given the significance of those discussions with the Scottish Government, and the potential for those to impact on our discussions with COSLA, the negotiating meeting that had been scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2018 was postponed.

### **Meeting with Derek Mackay MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution**

The meeting with Derek Mackay MSP took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and is best described as constructive but not conclusive. We pressed him on a number of issues including the overall funding settlement for local government, the application of the public sector pay policy, the issue of parity in the level of increases applied across the public sector, the impact of many years of below inflation increases and increased workloads. It was notable from this discussion that the Scottish Government are very focused on delivery of their education agenda – and remain in discussion with the Teachers unions about their pay increase - but we pointed out that this would not be achieved without the efforts of our members in Local Government. There were a number of issues on which the Cabinet Secretary agreed to provide us with more information and we left with an offer of a further meeting.

### **Further Representations to the Scottish Government**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> May we wrote again to the Cabinet Secretary confirming our wish to meet again and outlining the issues we thought could be usefully progressed – you can read a copy of that letter [here](#). We also understand that COSLA have also written a further letter to him challenging the Scottish Government's overall funding settlement figures.

### **Next steps**

We expect to meet again with the Cabinet Secretary soon and, following that, reschedule our talks with COSLA. At that stage we hope to be in a better position to know if there is any more money available to improve the offer that is currently before us and we will keep you up to speed with those discussions. We continue to believe there is a window of opportunity here that we should explore before taking a view on whether we have an offer we could recommend to you in a ballot. That may take some time and that window of opportunity may prove fruitful, or it may not, but we believe we have a responsibility to explore it before making a recommendation to you. In the meantime we will continue to work with our trade union colleagues on a co-ordinated approach to lobbying the Scottish Government and your employer in pursuit of our full claim.

### **How can you help?**

- Share this information with your colleagues and let them know what UNISON is doing to get you a decent pay increase.
- Ask fellow UNISON members to update their membership details so we have an e-mail address we can use to keep them up to date – they can update their details [here](#).
- Follow @UnisonScotLGvt on Twitter for updates.
- Write to your local Councillor/MSP and ask them to support our claim.

- Recruit a colleague – the more members we have the bigger our voice in negotiations. Colleagues can join at <http://www.unison-scotland.org/join-us/>.

We hope this update is helpful but if you have any questions or queries please don't hesitate in contacting us on [j.baxter@unison.co.uk](mailto:j.baxter@unison.co.uk).

Many thanks,

Johanna Baxter

UNISON, Head of Local Government Bargaining

Mark Ferguson

Chair, Scottish Local Government Committee

#### **For Reference:**

- [You can read the pay claim that was submitted to COSLA on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018 here](#)
- [You can read the employers offer letter, received on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018, here](#)
- [You can read the Joint Trades Union response to that offer sent to COSLA on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 here](#)
- [You can read the Joint Trades Union initial letter to Derek Mackay sent on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018 here](#)
- [You can read the response from Derek Mackay's office, received on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018, here](#)
- [You can read the Joint Trades Union further response to Derek Mackay, sent on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018, here](#)
- [You can read the Joint Trades Union further letter to Derek Mackay, following our meeting with him, sent on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018, here](#)