



- Sent via e-mail -

To: Gail MacGregor, COSLA Resources Spokesperson
Alison Evison, COSLA President
COSLA Leaders
Kate Forbes MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance
Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing & Local Govt

22nd June 2021

UNISON members prepare for action

It is now more than 6 months since the Joint Trade Unions submitted our pay claim on behalf of the 200k local government workers covered by the Scottish Joint Council. It is almost three months since we informed the employer that the only pay offer put before us had been overwhelmingly rejected by our members in a consultative ballot. And it is over a month since our last negotiating meeting with COSLA and no further meetings have been scheduled.

With 88% of our members voting to reject they have sent a very clear message that the current offer is simply not good enough - it does not put enough money in the pockets of members, it does not do enough to recognise the immense contribution they have made to keeping local services running over the past year, or the impact that this has had on them, and it does little to address the significant issue of low pay in local government. It should be a significant concern to all of you that 55% of local government workers earn below £25k per annum and 75% of them earn less than the average wage in Scotland of £31k per annum.

While COSLA and the Scottish government argue about where the money to make any improvement to the offer is going to come from our members are worried about how they will put food on the table.

Our recent survey, in which over 12,000 UNISON members working in local government participated, on their experiences during the last year underlined many of the arguments we have been making about the support, reward and recognition that should be provided to these essential workers.

The situation is now urgent. Our members are at breaking point and will no longer tolerate being used as a political football between your organisations.

All three trade unions are currently preparing statutory industrial action ballots and, if your discussions do not produce a substantial improvement to the current offer, it is anticipated that our members working in schools will be central to co-ordinated industrial action which will disrupt schools following the summer break.

We trust this information will inform the critical discussions you are due to have and we look forward to a positive outcome to those.

Yours sincerely,

Johanna Baxter
UNISON Scotland, Head of Local Government

c.c.: Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills
Simon Cameron, COSLA SJC Joint Secretary