



To: Simon Cameron, COSLA SJC Joint Secretary

c.c: Cllr Katy Hagmann, COSLA Resources Spokesperson
All Scottish Council Leaders
Humza Yousef MSP MSP, First Minister
Shona Robinson, Deputy First Minister & Finance Secretary
Keir Greenaway, GMB
Graham McNab, Unite

Date: 14th September 2023

- sent via e-mail -

Dear Simon,

SJC Pay 2023

We write further to the revised pay offer received yesterday, 13th September 2023.

We note that this is the only revision to the original offer made in April which our members rejected overwhelmingly at the time. We note that UNISON members in Stirling and Perth & Kinross have already taken industrial action over the pay offer for 2023 and that over 21,000 of our members, working in almost 2,000 schools across Scotland stand ready to take action on this issue later this month.

In our previous correspondence we have made very clear the need for COSLA to put forward a significantly improved offer to avert these strikes. The revised offer sent yesterday could in no way be deemed a significantly improved offer, indeed members of our Local Government Committee this morning described it as insulting. The revision is miniscule and as a result the unanimous decision of our Committee is that we reject this offer outright and proceed with strike action on the dates already notified.

In taking this decision our Committee noted:

1. The in-year average percentage uplift value offered in April was 5.51%.
The in-year average percentage uplift valued offered now is 5.67%.
This is an increase to the in-year average percentage uplift value of only 0.16%.
2. The end of year percentage uplift value average offered in April was 7.02%.
The end of year percentage uplift value average offered now is 7.19%.
This is an increase to the end of year percentage uplift value of only 0.17%.
3. For those earning the Scottish local government living wage:
the hourly rate effective from 1st April 2023 under the April offer was £11.39
the hourly rate effective from 1st April 2023 under this offer is £11.50.
This is an increase to the hourly rate effective from 1st April 2023 of only £0.11

And for those workers

the hourly rate effective from 1st Jan 2024 under the April offer was £11.84
the hourly rate effective from 1st Jan 2024 under this offer is £11.85
This is an increase to the hourly rate effective from 1st Jan 2024 of only £0.01

3. **For members on spinal column point 34 or above (for a full time worker this would equate to an average annual salary of £25,254) this offer contains no improvement**

whatsoever to the one presented to us in April and which members have already rejected. You will be aware that a huge number of members in this category are covered by our schools strike mandate.

4. The construct of this offer remains the same as the original despite UNISON making repeated and strong representations that any uplift needs to be applied **in full** from 1st April 2023 (not split between differing percentage increases applied in April 2023 and then in January 2024).

5. COSLA have not approached, and continue to refuse to approach, the Scottish Government for additional funding to make a meaningful improvement to the pay offer. Given the state of local authority budgets we believe this to be a dereliction of the duty to stand up for local government and fight for the funding needed to both properly reward the local government workforce and keep our public services running.

6. Whilst for those on the lowest pay the offer is now above the value of that made to colleagues in England and Wales it is barely so (there is now only a £4 difference between the two annual uplift figures).

7. Quoting the end-of-year uplift as the figure that members would receive is misleading – this does not reflect the money that members will get in their pockets now, which is substantially less.

8. This is a one year offer – it is deeply misleading for COSLA to describe this in the press as a 20% uplift over two years. The vast majority of members do not get anywhere near that amount.

It is deeply disappointing that it has taken COSLA five months since our members rejected the initial offer to present such insignificant changes to that offer.

The strike mandate we have is the strongest show of strength by our members in decades – their resolve to fight for the decent pay rise they, and all their colleagues across local government, so richly deserve is clear.

Unless a significantly improved offer is received by 5pm on Wednesday 20th September, allowing time for our Local Government Committee to take a view on it on the following day in advance of the public holiday weekend, our members working in schools will be taking action on 26th, 27th, 28th September 2023.

As always, we are available to meet with you at any time to discuss this and seek a resolution to the benefit of all.

Regards,

Johanna Baxter
Head of Local Government
UNISON Scotland

Mark Ferguson
Chair, Local Government Committee
UNISON Scotland