



To: Simon Cameron, COSLA SJC Joint Secretary
Cllr Katy Hagmann, COSLA Resources Spokesperson

c.c.: Humza Yousaf MSP, First Minister
Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Deputy First Minister
COSLA Leaders
Keir Greenaway, GMB
Graham McNab, Unite

Date: 21st September 2023

- sent via e-mail -

Dear Simon,

SJC Pay 2023

We write further to your revised pay offer received today at 3:12pm, after the deadline we provided you, and then the further extension you sought, to provide a substantially improved pay offer for our members.

The wording of the offer received was, at best, confusing. Whilst we acknowledge that it demonstrates some positive movement we remain concerned that:

- For members who earn above the Scottish Local Government Living Wage this offer differs from your original offer by only 0.5% in-year.
- The offer remains below the rate of inflation meaning that local government workers are again being asked to take a real-terms pay cut which they can ill-afford during a cost of living crises.
- The commitment to deliver a minimum underpinning rate of pay of £15per hour for the local government workforce remains vague and not within a timescale that we can agree.
- COSLA's own press release announcing this revised offer that "no new money has been identified for this offer". When we spoke to you yesterday you made clear that in the absence of additional financial support from the Scottish Government any improvement to the offer would result in further cuts to our members jobs and the services they provide.

Recognising that the offer demonstrates some progress our Local Government Committee has decided to consult our members on the offer. However, their recommendation is that members vote to reject the offer and the strike action currently planned for 26th, 27th & 28th September will go ahead.

The events leading up to this point have been wholly unacceptable. Yet again our members have been left waiting for an improved pay offer for months after their pay uplift was due, and right up until the eve of mass school closures, whilst COSLA and the Scottish Government have prevaricated over who will find the additional money needed to fund any improved offer and where they money will come from. This is no way to conduct industrial relations.

Far from learning the lessons of last year's dispute the situation we find ourselves in this year is worse, with further delays in payments being made to our members during a cost-of-living crises, uncertainty for parents and school closures for children. This cannot continue.

It is clear for everyone to see that the process for negotiating pay for these essential workers is broken and will remain so until the long-term financial sustainability of local government is assured.

We formally request a tri-partite meeting with yourselves and the Cabinet Secretary for Finance to discuss and resolve this matter as soon as possible.

Regards,

Johanna Baxter
Head of Local Government
UNISON Scotland

Mark Ferguson
Chair, Local Government Committee
UNISON Scotland