



To: Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance & Deputy First Minister  
Cllr Katie Hagmann, COSLA Resources Spokesperson

c.c.: Humza Yousaf MSP, First Minister  
Simon Cameron, COSLA SJC Joint Secretary  
COSLA Leaders

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023

- sent via e-mail -

Dear Shona, Katie,

### **SJC Pay 2023**

Over the past three days over 21,000 UNISON members in 1868 schools across 24 Scottish local authorities have taken strike action in pursuit of an improved pay offer.

That it should have come to this is deeply disappointing however we hope you have taken note of the strength of feeling amongst our members and their resolve to continue to fight for fair pay for the whole local government workforce.

We note that there has been no attempt to contact us at any point during this time to seek to resolve the dispute and avoid the inevitable disruption to parents and children.

### **SCP Information**

We note that despite our previous requests we have yet to receive a copy of the revised pay scales which would apply to the latest offer. Previous offers have come with the revised pay scales attached so we would question why these are not being provided on this occasion. You will note that the employer has an obligation under the TULRA to provide such information as would assist the bargaining process. We therefore formally make the request again for provision of these prior to Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October so that members can have sight of them when our consultative ballot launches.

### **Where's the money coming from?**

We note that there have been numerous 'explanations' of where the additional funding has come from to support the latest offer. You will be aware that UNISON's concern that your original press release announcing the latest offer stated that no new money had been found to support it and that instead monies had been 're-profiled' from other budgets to fund it. The letter sent to us on XDX then stated that the offer did contain new money and that there would be no impact on jobs or services.

We then learn from the press that the re-profiled money has been taken from the Redress Scheme, which supports child abuse victims, and also from the Pupil Equity Fund. Monies taken from either of these funds will almost certainly impact on the jobs of the council workers who support them and definitely services they provide to vulnerable children. Please clarify precisely where the money has come from to support the latest offer and why the Scottish Government refuse to provide additional funding to councils that would prevent further cuts and protect jobs. UNISON's position remains that we will not trade pay for jobs.

As previously advised our Local Government Committee is proceeding with the organisation of our member consultation but with the recommendation that members vote to reject the offer. The offer remains unclear, remains below the applicable rate of inflation and there is insufficient commitment to delivering a £15 per hour minimum underpinning rate of pay for all local government workers.

Our Local Government Committee will meet early next week to discuss and agree the next stage of our industrial action and details of this will be released in due course. You will wish to note that future strike days are likely to be even bigger than the ones this week since we have welcomed several thousand new members to the UNISON family over the last week.

We remain committed to finding a resolution to this which avoids further action and will make ourselves available to discuss this with you whenever you wish.

Regards,

**Johanna Baxter**  
**Head of Local Government**  
**UNISON Scotland**

**Mark Ferguson**  
**Chair, Local Government Committee**  
**UNISON Scotland**