



To: The Leaders of Scottish Local Authorities
From: SJC Trade Union Joint Secretaries
CC: Tom Young, COSLA SJC Secretary
Date: 29th November 2018
Subject: 2018/19 Pay - Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees

Dear Council Leader,

We write in advance of the meeting of COSLA Leaders on 30th November 2018 at which we understand you will be discussing the 2018/19 pay award for employees covered by the SJC.

We write to you directly because you have a pivotal role in determining whether Scotland sees, for the first time in many years, widespread industrial action across the Local Government workforce in the near future or whether COSLA listens to the concerns put forward by the trades unions on behalf of our members and takes steps to address them.

Revised offer

You will have approved, and had sight of, the revised pay offer that was put to us on the 6th September 2018.

Each of our trade unions undertook our own consultations on that offer in which the overwhelming majority of our members voted to reject it. Our formal rejection of that consultation was relayed to COSLA at a meeting of the SJC held on the 9th November 2018.

The reasons for our recommendation to members to reject the offer, and the subsequent membership votes to do so, are outlined in detail in our letter to COSLA of the 15th September (attached for your information).

We are disappointed that we have not yet received a formal response to that letter.

Tripartite Meeting

In an effort to move the issue on we wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Derek Mackay, on the 15th November 2018 requesting a tripartite meeting, prior to the Scottish budget on the 12th December 2018, to discuss our serious concerns with local government funding and the impact this has had in terms of the 18/19 pay negotiations.

Mr Mackay has now agreed to this subject to finding a suitable date/time.

Key Issues

Without rehearsing every detail of our negotiations we believe there are a number of issues that you as Leaders need to look at when considering your next steps:

Inflation

The offer of the 6th September 2018 provides a cost of living increase which remains below the current rate of inflation. Our members have suffered a real terms loss in salary due to below inflation increases of some 15% over the past 10 years. Our members have been clear that another below inflation increase is unacceptable so we need movement on this year's offer.

Low Pay

The revised offer does not improve the position for those on the lowest pay. The Scottish Government have been clear that all areas of the public sector should have by now implemented the Living Wage and that this payment should be consolidated.

We would urge you to question why the majority of councils have not yet consolidated the living wage and why many do not yet have any plans to do so.

Parity

You will know that the issue of parity is a principle area of concern for our members. We are grateful that the President of COSLA agrees with us on this issue (letter attached for your information).

We understand the decision to find additional money - another £38m we believe - to improve Teachers pay, but nothing for other Local Government workers, was the Scottish Government's. We understand the issue about local government funding and we have already, and indicated our willingness to do so in the future, argued for additional funding for local government.

But the situation where one bargaining group is given preferential treatment above all others can no longer continue. The principle of parity across local government is long held and the justifications for finding additional monies for Teachers apply equally to other areas of the local government workforce. You are the employer – it is your responsibility to uphold the principle of parity.

Our members have been clear - they can put up with no more.

There is now a very real possibility of widespread industrial action across the Local Government workforce unless you take measures to improve the current offer. We would urge you to do so.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Johanna Baxter
SJC Joint Secretary
UNISON

Drew Duffy
SJC Joint Secretary
GMB

Elaine Dougall
SJC Joint Secretary
UNITE