



To: All Scottish Council Leaders

c.c: Cllr Gail MacGregor, COSLA Resources Spokesperson
Simon Cameron, COSLA SJC Joint Secretary
Aileen Campbell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government

From: SJC Trade Union Joint Secretaries

Date: 19th February 2021

Dear Leader,

SJC Pay 2021

We write following our recent SJC Steering Group meeting with COSLA representatives on 16th February 2021. This meeting was specifically arranged to discuss 2021 pay for the SJC workforce.

We are extremely disappointed that, having submitted our joint pay claim on 16th December 2020, we were told at this meeting that COSLA have been given no mandate by Leaders to negotiate pay with us at this time.

We understand the rationale for this is that COSLA cannot begin negotiations until the Scottish Government's budget, the third reading of which is currently scheduled for 8th March 2021, has been passed and the final local government settlement is known. This is despite the fact that organisations up and down the country are taking decisions on the basis of the draft budget right now – local authorities and the Scottish Government are all taking decisions on the basis of assumptions about the Holyrood and Westminster settlements before they are finalised.

Whilst we appreciate concerns remain regarding the size of the local government settlement – concerns which we share and continue to lobby government to address – COSLA is the employers body and has a duty to this workforce.

It is clear that if Leaders choose not to enter into meaningful negotiations prior to 8th March 2021 there will be no possibility at all that workers will receive any increase by the 1st April 2021 implementation date. Even assuming that an offer is forthcoming at that point, an assumption we are not at this stage confident in making, each trade union will still need to consult their members about their views on it before negotiations can be concluded.

The pay implementation date is not new and the joint trade unions intentionally submitted the claim in good time so the commitment to secure a settlement by the 1 April implementation date could be realised. Likewise COSLA have known about it and should similarly have been planning for it before now.

These workers have gone above and beyond in delivering local services during what can only be described as a year of unprecedented challenges and pressures. They deserve a decent pay increase delivered in a timely manner.

We look forward to hearing from you on this pressing issue.

Best wishes,

Johanna Baxter
SJC Joint Secretary
UNISON

Wendy Dunsmore
SJC Joint Secretary
UNITE

Drew Duffy
SJC Joint Secretary
GMB