

COSLA make pay offer to unions after emergency meeting

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, COSLA, the councillor-led, cross-party organisation held a Special Meeting of Council Leaders on Friday 19 August, 2022 to discuss the pay offer for local authority employees.

Following the meeting, COSLA Resources Spokesperson, Councillor Katie Hagmann commented: "Following Leaders Special meeting today they have mandated me to move forward with our trade union partners on the basis of an offer that raises the overall value to 5% and in addition raises the Scottish Local Government Living Wage to £10.50.

"In doing so, Leaders have reaffirmed the need for a discussion with Scottish Government on how they can support Councils by providing flexibilities and long term funding support. This will limit the risk to public services and the impact on communities."

Last week COSLA increased the offer from 2% to 3.5%. All three unions rejected the offer which some said they regarded as "insulting", particularly as NHS workers had already been

offered 5%. The waste and cleansing teams in Edinburgh began a proposed 12 days of strike action yesterday.

Council Leader Cammy Day said: “Having pushed hard for a special COSLA meeting to be convened this week, I’m pleased that positive progress we’ve made today. A formal offer has now been made to trade unions, which I hope will be considered.

“We need to continue to press The Scottish Government for more flexibility in the use of council resources and fairer funding to sustain services.

“In the meantime, I would urge everyone to continue following our advice on how to deal with your waste safely and responsibly to help us manage the impact of the strike action. Please check the [dedicated pages on our website](#) and keep an eye on our social media channels, where we’ll be posting the most up-to-date information.”

Former Council Leader and leader of the SNP Group on The City of Edinburgh Council, Cllr Adam McVey said this afternoon: “We’re pleased to see COSLA finally agree a 5% pay offer to our hardworking staff. We hope this offer will help get COSLA and the unions back around the negotiating table, 5% is the minimum offer our staff deserve.

“It’s regrettable that Edinburgh’s Labour Leader didn’t back this position a week ago when it was proposed by SNP councillors. In a cost-of-living crisis we all need to show leadership and support our staff to get the best deal. We hope this revised offer is more reflective of the value of their contribution to our city.”

After last Friday’s meeting the statement from COSLA indicated that the organisation would continue to move towards the Scottish Local Government Living Wage of £10.50 and that Leaders continued to call on The Scottish Government to “provide funding to enable an offer to be made which would be

beyond the monies provided to date” – which we understand means that the Government would make up the difference. COSLA said at that time they hoped to make an improved offer as soon as possible.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Local Government Minister Shona Robison said: “This increased pay offer to local government workers is a welcome step forward and has been supported by the Scottish Government’s commitment of an additional £140 million for council workers’ pay on a recurring basis.

“Throughout discussions, despite Ministers having no formal role in the pay negotiations between councils and their employees, we have sought to work collaboratively with COSLA while providing full transparency around our financial position.

“All areas of the public sector are having to make challenging savings to stay within existing budgets. The UK Government has provided no further funding for these pressures with last year’s Spending Review not taking account of the levels of pay uplift needed or the wider effects of inflation. Nevertheless, we have sought to support a meaningful revised offer in the face of the cost emergency.”

Alison Maclean, Unite industrial officer, said: “It has taken COSLA over five months to make an offer which we can take to our members for consideration. While the five per cent offer is an improvement it is important to emphasise that it comes at a time when broader inflation has now hit a forty year high at 12.3 per cent. Unite’s local government committee will urgently consider this latest offer. At this juncture the strikes for next week continue as planned.”