

# Deputy First Minister has talks with unions

**The Deputy First Minister, John Swinney has been in talks with the local government unions on Wednesday.**

Johanna Baxter, UNISON head of local government said: “We have held detailed constructive talks with Deputy First Minister this evening at St Andrews House. We welcome that he listened to UNISON concerns and was keen to explore how he could support getting council pay talks pay back on track.

“We were clear that we need to rethink not only the construction of the pay offer, so that those on the lowest incomes are fairly treated, we also need to explore ways in which we can increase the overall cash available to come to a fair offer.

“There was a general agreement that only two negotiating meetings in eight months on pay was not acceptable, and better processes need to be put in place to facilitate finding speedier solutions on pay.

“Although we do not have an offer today UNISON will continue to work with the Deputy First Minister and COSLA to find a way forward towards a solution that benefits all our members.”

Wendy Dunsmore, Unite industrial officer, said: “Constructive talks have now finished involving the trade unions and the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney. The trade unions were informed that the DFM would now engage COSLA on a mechanism which could facilitate funding but that this would not

come directly from the Scottish Government. It would include examining fiscal flexibilities and areas of ring-fenced funding. We acknowledge that this is movement but there is no new offer on the table and the strikes continue. The trade unions are requesting that the Scottish Government directly engage in these negotiations involving COSLA and ourselves in an effort to resolve this dispute. “

Waste and cleansing workers in Edinburgh have been on strike for six days since last Thursday and rubbish is piling up in the streets. Earlier today opposition MSPs called for the Scottish Government to [resolve the dispute.](#)