

Bin strikes inevitable in Edinburgh as union rejects latest pay offer

Unite the union has rejected the latest pay offer from local government body COSLA, meaning bin strikes will be inevitable in Edinburgh during the festivals unless any new deal is put forward.

Unite said that the latest offer does not add any extra cash to the deal which stands at a 3.2 % increase for one year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The union says that COSLA has taken two months to make a new offer since the last which was rejected on 24 May.

The union compares the deal on offer with the one put to workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland by the National Joint Council (NJC), which equates to a rise of 67 pence an hour, with the Scottish offer of an increase of 41 pence per hour.

The union claims that the pay offer difference means a Scottish council worker would have to earn more than £40,000 to match the offer being made to council workers elsewhere in the UK. The union says this means “the lowest paid council workers in Scotland are being disproportionately hit by COSLA’s offer”.

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “COSLA has taken

months to put a new offer to our local government membership, and it's one that does absolutely nothing to address more than a decade of deep cuts to pay and services.

"Unless COSLA and the Scottish government move quickly to make an acceptable offer then mountains of rubbish will pile up across the nation's streets. The politicians have a choice, and one more chance, to resolve this pay dispute before strike action."

Unite has the largest union membership on the verge of participating in a first wave of strike action involving waste workers, street cleaners, and recycling centre operators.

The union has strike action mandates involving thousands of its members across 16 councils, and it is in the process of re-balloting workers in 5 other councils (see notes to editor).

Graham McNab, Unite industrial officer, added: "COSLA's latest pay offer doesn't add any extra cash. It continues to grossly undervalue Scotland's council workers compared with the offer made to their counterparts across the UK.

"A stinking Scottish summer looms unless COSLA and the Scottish government quickly sort this out by injecting more cash into a new offer. Any offer will need to value the lowest paid council workers, at least, on similar terms as the offer made to other UK council workers.

"The Scottish government can no longer sit idly by, we are on the brink of nationwide strike action which could last for months."

The 16 council areas where Unite has mandates for strike action include Edinburgh, *Aberdeen City Council*; *Angus Council*; *Dumfries & Galloway Council*; *Dundee City Council*; *East Ayrshire Council*; *East Renfrewshire Council*; *Fife Council*; *Glasgow City Council*; *Inverclyde Council*; *North*

Ayrshire Council; North Lanarkshire Council; Renfrewshire Council; South Ayrshire Council; The Highland Council and West Lothian Council.



Bins were left uncollected in August 2022 during the last strike