

West Lothian could be hit by bin strikes following vote by Unite union

West Lothian is one of 16 local authorities which could be hit by bin strikes following a vote by the Unite union.

The union- Scotland's largest- yesterday announced it has a mandate for the strike in cleansing and waste services in a pay dispute.

The industrial action could also hit neighbouring councils in Edinburgh and North Lanarkshire Councils. In the Lothians only East Lothian workers did not take part in the ballot

The union said it will reveal in the coming days the details of strike action involving waste workers, street cleaners, and recycling centre operators across the 16 councils, which could begin in just over two weeks' time.

The union had previously warned major events could potentially be impacted by strike action including the Edinburgh festivals similar to the local government pay dispute two years ago

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "After years of cuts to council pay and services, years of chronic underfunding and under staffing, our membership is saying no more. Enough. They have Unite's unequivocal support in the fight for better jobs, pay and conditions across Scottish local government."

In May Unite confirmed that its local government representatives had rejected outright a formal pay offer from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities' (COSLA). The offer comprises 2.2 per cent effective from 1 April to 30 September, and then two per cent for a 12 month period effective from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

Unite rejected the offer, and the proposal to change the pay anniversary date from April to October on the basis that it is nothing but an attempt to "kick the can down the road."

Graham McNab, Unite industrial officer added: "Thousands of workers in cleansing and waste services are now on the brink of taking strike action in a matter of weeks. Our members are being left with no choice but to fight for fair pay."

"Council workers deserve to be treated with respect but instead they received a pitiful pay offer which was rejected outright by Unite. This situation is entirely in the hands of COSLA and the Scottish government who can resolve this dispute at any moment by making a significantly improved pay offer."

A spokesperson for West Lothian Council said: "We are assessing the impact at this time."

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter