

Edinburgh bin strike called off at eleventh hour

A bin collectors' strike set to disrupt the Edinburgh Festival has been called off at the eleventh hour as workers consider a new pay offer.

Waste and cleansing staff were due to walk out for eight days starting on Wednesday (August 14) but unions said today the strike action would now be suspended.

Unite and GMB confirmed the news on Monday afternoon, saying its members would be urged to accept the latest offer when the next ballot opens later this week.

Meanwhile Unison was yet to make an announcement following the crunch talks.

COSLA, the body that represents councils, is now offering all staff at least a 3.6 per cent increase – up from the previous offer of 3.2 per cent – and a rise of £1,292 for the lowest paid, equivalent to 5.63 per cent.

It comes after the Scottish Government “identified additional funding” to put more money on the table, which Finance Secretary Shona Robison said represented the “absolute limit of affordability”.

Graham McNab, Unite’s lead negotiator for local government said: “Unite members across all of Scotland’s councils should be applauded for standing firm. They have remained resolute in an effort to secure a fairer and better pay offer.”

“We believe that the new pay offer is credible. For the first time in years, it will mean all council workers receiving an above inflation increase.”

“Unite will now suspend the eight days of strike action so a ballot can take place on the new offer.”

Unite’s ballot will open on Thursday (August 15) and close on 5 September.

Keir Greenaway, GMB Scotland senior organiser in public services, said: “This offer is a significant improvement on what came before but our members will decide if it is acceptable.

“As a gesture of goodwill, we will suspend action until our members can vote on the offer.”

NOTE TO EDITORS: Please see below a quote from the council leader to be included in the story ‘Bin strikes suspended following new pay offer’ published 12/8/24

Cammy Day, leader of Edinburgh Council, said: “I’m pleased that strike action has been suspended while union members consider this latest offer, which I’d urge them to accept.

“On working with COSLA to put the latest deal on the table, I’m grateful that the Scottish Government have finally listened to local authorities, recognised the value of our hard-working colleagues here in Edinburgh and across Scotland.

“I firmly believe that all council colleagues deserve to be paid fairly for the work they do and have every right to take this action and have their voices heard. As the lowest funded council in Scotland, it’s time for the Scottish Government to properly fund our capital city and its services.

“We know from our previous experience of industrial action two years ago the huge impact it had on our city. If we do manage to reach a resolution, it will come as a huge relief to

residents and businesses across Edinburgh, alongside the visitors from across the globe who are here experiencing our fantastic festivals.

“I urge the Scottish Government and COSLA leadership to urgently reconsider how we approach these negotiations in future – otherwise we’ll find ourselves back here again in 12 months’ time.”

By Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter