

Lothian councils prepare for bin strikes

Residents in Midlothian have been warned next week's planned strike action will disrupt waste, street cleaning and recycling services in the county.

The local authority is one of 26 facing industrial action after members of the GMB, Unison and Unite unions voted to walk out as part of a national pay dispute.

Meanwhile neighbouring East Lothian Council has said that while household waste services, which are collected every three weeks, will be affected its food waste and recycling is collected by an outside contractor so will continue as normal.

Waste workers are expected to go out on strike for a week from next Wednesday, August 14, unless a deal can be struck between unions and council body Cosla.

In Midlothian people are being warned that if industrial action goes ahead all waste and recycling collections will be suspended along with garden waste.

The county's recycling centres at Stobhill and Penicuik will also close and there will be no emptying of litter and dog waste bins or street cleaning taking place.

The council has asked residents and businesses to safely and responsibly store their waste until it is in a position to be collected again.

Midlothian Council leader Kelly Parry said: “The lack of consensus on a pay deal everyone can live with is obviously concerning and disappointing, and we had hoped these strikes could be avoided.

“We’re acutely conscious of how disruptive and challenging this is going to be for everyone, and I’d urge residents and businesses to be patient as a resolution is sought.

“We also know that talks are ongoing and that things can change. We value the contribution of our waste and recycling colleagues very highly, and we want to see them compensated equitably, so from our perspective it’s vital that a solution to the current situation is reached as quickly as possible.

“In the meantime, I’d like to reassure all of our residents that while action continues, we’ll be working hard to ensure the effect on essential services is minimised as far as possible.”

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter