

Lobby of CoSLA Edition - Issue 5 - July 2008

In this Edition

**Update on
Ballot
materials**

Lobby of CoSLA

Ballot Hotline

**Message from
General
Secretary and
the Scottish
Secretary**

**Renfrewshire
Council Senior
Management
Review**

Key Dates

YOU DESERVE A FAIR DEAL – VOTE FOR ONE!

Scotland's Joint Union Local Government Pay Campaign

As UNISON's local government members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland voted by 55% to 45% for a programme of sustained strike action over a 2.45% pay offer, here in Scotland we are now well into the ballot period.

It is vitally important that we generate a high turn out in the ballot and that we have a very clear majority in favour of industrial action.

To assist branches and stewards in our campaign the following campaign materials have been produced:

- **Pay Matters Campaign Pack: Consisting of a briefing for stewards; model press release and model letters to Elected Members and MSPs.**
- **Vote 'YES' poster/leaflet**
- **Vote 'YES' Say No to Low Pay leaflet**
- **Vote 'YES' Cost of Living leaflet**
- **Model letters to your local papers**

All of these materials have been sent directly to branches either in bulk or by email, and they are available to download from the web site at:

<http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/localgovt/pay2008/index.html>

A dedicated email address has now been set up which branches and staff can use to raise any issue regarding the current Pay Ballot and subsequent action. The address will be administered on a regular basis and emails directed to the appropriate person for a quick response. The address will remain open until the dispute is settled. The address is:

Sjcpayballot08@unison.co.uk

IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED YOUR BALLOT PAPER CONTACT

BALLOT HELPLINE 0845 355 0845

Open 8 – 28 July, 6am – Midnight, Mon – Fri and 9am – 4pm Saturday and Sunday

Pay offer doesn't address rising costs –

Stephanie Herd

The Chair of UNISON's Scottish Local Government Committee said: "With inflation running at 3 – 4% and many items such as fuel and food surging in price by 15 – 40% it is no wonder that members who deliver our vital services reject being locked into a below-inflation deal for the next three years".

"In addition, with fuel costs spiralling, many staff who use their cars to do their work are effectively subsidising employers. We hope that our employers will see that to deliver the improved services we all want, we need staff who are properly paid and qualified. Pay offers like the current one will do nothing to attract and retain these staff".

"I am pleased and encouraged that we had a great turnout at the lobby by the three unions".

"What can you buy for 46p? It is for that reason we took the coins with us. To our recent lobby. CoSLA says that this is a publicity stunt, but we are actually highlighting to our members what the pay offer means".

Vote YES to show we mean business

Dave Prentis General Secretary



As UNISON's General Secretary, I am urging you to support the recommendation of the Scottish Local Government Committee and vote 'YES' for strike action in support of this year's SJC pay claim. We are asking for a single year deal, 5% or £1000 – whichever is the greater plus additional annual leave and public holidays.

The employers have simply offered a 3 year settlement worth 2.5% in each year. No offer was made regarding additional annual leave or public holiday provision.

The employers' offer is not only well below inflation but is less than the increase in average earnings across the economy.

The Scottish employers have made it very clear that their offer is final. We need a very clear 'YES' vote in this ballot to show that we have had enough of low pay and force the employers back to the negotiating table. That means that you will need to take part in substantial industrial action starting with a one day all out strike, supported by a rolling programme of national selective action and further days of all out action if required.

Our colleagues in the GMB and UNITE (T&G) are also committed to this campaign. Therefore I am asking you to support industrial action for a better deal for you and all our members on SJC conditions.

If you vote 'YES' the first day of action will be in the middle of August after the schools return from the summer break. This will be followed by a programme of selective action and further days of action if the employers don't improve their offer. You can find out how to play an active role in the campaign by contacting your UNISON branch or ringing the helpline on 0845 355 0845.

Please support UNISON's campaign by voting 'YES' for strike action.

Let's show that we mean business – in UNISON.

Message from Matt Smith



As we embark on our ballot, this will be the number one priority for the union in the period ahead.

A 'YES' is the aim and with a maximum turnout.

During the ballot period there will be many tasks to undertake to ensure that we deliver and our organising staff in particular will be supporting branches with that work.

All of us share in this task and if and when we have a successful outcome there will be a need to maximise support for our members taking action.

The Scottish Government has adopted the Treasury Pay Guidelines so there is little if any difference in the approach in Scotland from the rest of the UK.

CoSLA Lobby highlights low pay

The Joint Union Pay Campaign Group (PCG) arranged a lobby of the employers on Wednesday 25 June - the date of the meeting of negotiators, which was cancelled by the employers. Members of the three unions were there.



Dougie Black said:

“Despite public statements from CoSLA that they are still in negotiation, the employers recently cancelled a negotiating meeting scheduled for today. We have decided that that our negotiators, and a some of our low paid members, will keep the appointment nevertheless to make the point to CoSLA that their offer is unacceptable”.

The demonstrators carried the princely sum of 46p – the total increase per hour that our lowest paid members can expect if they accept the employers' offer.

Hastily arranged negotiations make no steps forward

The employers agreed to meet with the negotiating team on Monday 30 June. But speaking after the meeting, Dougie Black said, “CoSLA have failed to respond to the rejection of their inadequate offer with anything meaningful to address our members concerns. In particular they have failed to tackle the issue that the offer increases the gap between the higher and lower paid. At the bottom end the offer means a mere 15p per hour increase in the first year.”

Dougie concluded by saying, “It is clear that UNISON members in Scotland need to deliver a clear 'YES' vote in the ballot to push Scottish employers into taking their concerns seriously”.

BALLOT HELPLINE 0845 355 0845

We need your help!

At the recent Local Government Conference on Pay, the campaign pack was launched.

It was agreed by the committee and the conference to add 'case studies' to the pack.

These 'case studies' should assist branches during the campaign.

They are also needed to allow us to respond to press queries with good human examples.

Please forward your 'case studies' to Chris Bartter at: c.bartter@unison.co.uk

Renfrewshire Senior Management Review Sparks Protest

A recent decision to review the salaries of Senior Managers at Renfrewshire Council has sparked a series of protests amongst local UNISON members.

The proposal would see the salary of a Head of Service rise from £66,873.00 to £78,045.00 – a rise of approx 16%, whilst the salary of a Director would rise from £95,583.00 to £101,985.00 – a rise of approx 6%.

Mark Ferguson, UNISON's Renfrewshire Branch Secretary, has written to the Leader of Renfrewshire Council, Cllr Derek Mackay, expressing the branch's concern at the proposal.

UNISON recognises that all staff should be paid a fair salary for their responsibilities. We are however concerned these proposals come at a time when we are balloting members for industrial action on an inadequate offer of 2.5%.

Speaking at a lobby of the council on Wednesday 25th June, Mark said, "While it is important that all our staff are paid a fair salary for their responsibilities, it is deeply insensitive for the council to suggest such major increases for senior staff, whilst at the same time through CoSLA they are promoting what is in effect a pay cut to the rest of the staff.

"If it is the case that they need to pay more to senior staff to attract and retain the best candidates; we suggest that they might want to consider paying more - rather than less – to other staff for the same reason".

And Finally! - Key Dates

- 8 JULY Ballot Helpline Opens - **0845 355 0845**
- 9 JULY National Press Campaign
- 12 JULY Local Government Update available on website
- 14 JULY Start of political campaign with first mailing to MSPs
- 16/17 JULY National days of action in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 25 JULY **Branches to have indentified selective groupings**
- 28 JULY Helpline closes
- 31 JULY Ballot closes
- 1 AUGUST Ballot result
- 1 AUGUST Special Scottish Local Government Committee
- 1 AUGUST Strike Action Plan to branches
- 5 AUGUST Local Government Update sent to branches

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If you have any comments about or require any further information regarding any of the issues raised in this publication please contact: Kevin O'Neil, Area Organiser – k.oneil@unison.co.uk or 0131 226 0068