Major cuts considered by council

The City of Edinburgh Council is set to consider options at its meeting in September aimed at reducing management costs and increasing efficiencies in preparation for government funding cuts. If approved, around £16m would be saved over the next three years as a first step towards the budget savings target of £90m.

The proposals, which have come from Council officers, cover management posts and 'backroom' functions. Information on the options is being shared with unions today with a briefing also going to all staff. It is expected that in the first instance around 300 jobs could be affected across all departments.

Any reductions in staff would be handled through a combination of options, including reducing temporary staff, leaving vacancies unfilled, early retirement, voluntary redundancy, and redeployment to vacant posts that need to be filled. Compulsory redundancies cannot be ruled out. While some of the posts will go between now and the new financial year, it may take longer for the full effect of the changes to be implemented. A consultation process has begun with unions, and staff are currently being briefed on the proposals.

Council Leader Cllr Jenny Dawe said: "The harsh reality of the UK budget deficit requires us to confront some very difficult decisions. These officer recommendations highlight the scale and severity of the challenge. We recognise just how concerning this is for staff and we will critically examine the proposals received from directors. We will do all we can to support staff and to protect the valued and vital services they deliver for the people of Edinburgh."

The Council has taken the exceptional step of presenting these

options to the 16 September meeting of the Full Council, rather than waiting for the normal budget-setting process in February, to allow more time to manage any changes. Further savings proposals are being developed which will be the subject of full public engagement over September and October before they are considered by councillors.