

# Four men jailed for council corruption



Four men responsible for various corruption offences identified within the City of Edinburgh Council have been jailed.

At the High Court in Edinburgh on Thursday, Charles Owenson (62) was sentenced to four years and four months in prison, while James Costello (44) was given a sentence of three years and nine months. Brendan Cantwell (44) was given a sentence of two year and three months and Kevin Balmer (54) was sentenced to two years and ten months in prison.

All four pleaded guilty last month following an investigation into the City of Edinburgh Council's allocation of building work contracts to private building firms.

In addition, further charges of fraud and money laundering were libelled against Costello and Owenson, which they were also sentenced for today.

Detective Inspector Arron Clinkscales said: "These men knowingly misused public funds to establish building work contracts that ultimately benefited themselves, rather than go through the appropriate and legal channels.

"Police Scotland carried out a robust investigation into this complex enquiry, resulting in Owenson, Costello, Cantwell and Balmer being identified and subsequently charged with a variety of corruption offences.

"The sentences they have been handed today reflects our commitment to working alongside our relevant partners to tackle all forms of fraudulent and corrupt activity, wherever

it may arise."