

UNISON issue warning to council on compulsory redundancies

✘ The trade union has issued a warning to the council that they are in danger of breaking election promises. The Union issued this statement:

As more details emerge today of Edinburgh council plans to cut £141 million over four years, UNISON's Edinburgh Branch is calling on the council's ruling capital coalition to stand by the promises of no compulsory redundancies and no privatisation that they were elected upon.

The figures UNISON released yesterday of £141 million in cuts have been confirmed and while the council claims 2,000 jobs will be lost, UNISON stands by its assessment that 3,000 jobs are at risk.

Councillors appear to be actively considering officials' recommendations to ditch the council's no compulsory redundancy policy. We note the council leader's statement in the council meeting today that he expects officials to stick to council policies. This leaves UNISON wondering what is the chicken and what is the egg and whether or not the Capital Coalition of Labour and SNP have signalled to officials that compulsory redundancies may be acceptable.

Councillors also appear to be considering privatisation of Facilities Management with alleged savings of £80 million. On the money front that seems far too good to be true. Surely senior officials and councillors will recognise that if something looks too good to be true, it usually is.

John Stevenson, from UNISON Edinburgh branch, said. "Our view is that if this privatisation is being held up as a way of

avoiding compulsory redundancies, it is a flawed idea and all we will end up with the triple-whammy of privatisation, compulsory redundancies and ruined services.

The continued drive by senior officials to introduce privatisation despite the council 'presumption' against privatisation is deeply worrying. Edinburgh needs to reaffirm its commitment to a public service culture and abandon the privatisation 'solutions' that have been so disastrous elsewhere.

UNISON will examine all of the proposals in detail and continue to lobby against compulsory redundancies and privatisation."

John Stevenson also said, "UNISON Edinburgh Branch members, in successive Annual General Meetings since 1998, have consistently demanded an industrial action ballot in the event of compulsory redundancies. That is a mandate that gives confidence that they would overwhelmingly vote for action in such a ballot".