

# UNISON question the number of council employees to lose jobs



The union UNISON has voiced fears that there will be three times as many jobs lost during Edinburgh Council's transformation programme as the council had previously advised.

UNISON says that it believes as many as 3,000 jobs – one in every six council staff – will be slashed as the effects of the Transformation Programme and future budget cuts become clear.

“The effect on services and staff will be devastating as up to 15% of council employees could face being forced out of their jobs”, said Amanda Kerr, UNISON branch secretary.

“Losing this amount of staff will decimate the services we provide and the public rely on to the point where they would be unrecognisable.”

Gerry Stovin, service conditions officer, added: “We no longer believe the myth that the Transformation Programme is an efficiency driven exercise but recognise it as ideologically driven and a threat to public services.

“It is now time for the politicians to stand up for the pledges they were elected on and support UNISON in the fight to save public services in Edinburgh for future generations.”

Cllr Alasdair Rankin, Finance Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “The Council has been clear about the scale of the financial challenge facing us for years. The city's population is growing and demand for Council services

is higher than ever.

“We need to make very substantial savings over the next four years and we have already put in place a number of key measures to achieve the required efficiencies. The Coalition has delivered £39m worth of savings during the first two years through an improved strategy for buying goods and services and we recently announced a new ICT contract which will save a further £6m a year.

“The Council needs to ensure we continue to deliver quality frontline services as efficiently and effectively as possible. No one ever said this was going to be easy or straightforward but we want to safeguard those services as much as possible. Realistically, to make the necessary savings, we have little option but to consider reducing the number of people who work for the Council. Bearing in mind we are keenly aware that this is about people we will work closely with our staff and the trade unions during this difficult time.

“We are very clear about the size of the challenge and over the coming days we will be outlining our proposed next steps.”

The council’s Finance and Resources Committee is due to meet next Thursday 24 September 2015.