

Unions plan protest at the City Chambers tomorrow



Trade Unions including UNISON, community groups and anti-cuts organisations are gearing up for twin demonstrations in Edinburgh and Glasgow on October 29 against another ‘savage’ round of council cuts.

The Edinburgh lobby will take place at the City Chambers on the High Street.

In Edinburgh, the unions say the council’s income has dropped by almost 20 per cent in real terms since 2010, and workers face redundancies with over 2,000 jobs to go.

Unions are calling on the council to declare a “no more cuts” budget.

UNISON Edinburgh branch president John Stevenson said: “Some telling figures expose the human effect of these savage cuts. Edinburgh has around 18,000 employees. Most of them – about 10,000 workers – require protection of vulnerable groups (PVG) clearance to do their jobs. That’s how many provide direct services to children and vulnerable adults. It doesn’t take a genius to spot that those services are at risk.

“The council is being asked to make two years cuts in six months. This could bring unnecessary compulsory redundancies and UNISON will urge its members to take action if that is the case.

John Stevenson also slammed the ‘chaos’ of council reorganisation: “The deadline for voluntary redundancies has passed, yet nobody knows what the new council structures will

look like, so how do bosses know where redundancies need to come from? How did workers know whether to seek redundancy? Could they afford to take the chance with the threat of compulsory redundancy on minimum terms? Will the council just structure services around who is left? This chaos has to stop."

Dave Watson, head of UNISON bargaining and campaigns, said 'We are calling on Scottish Councils and the Scottish Government to look very seriously at what other options they have to mitigate the impact of UK Government austerity. We fully understand the difficult position they are in, but they can look at borrowing at record low interest rates, refinancing, using reserves, reforming taxation, and make better use of pension funds. We will ofcourse continue to campaign with them on fighting UK government austerity. However we think there is much more they can do to consider no more cuts budgets'