

Councillor asks for action on construction sites

Councillor Cammy Day lodged a motion at today's council meeting to introduce a construction charter to make building in the city safer for employees.

The motion read:

"Acknowledges the importance of a construction charter to ensure health and safety and best value for the city. Instructs officers to work with the trades unions and report back within two cycles on the adoption of a construction charter. The report should include robust monitoring/checking and reporting processes to ensure all contractors and sub contractors abide by the charter on sites delivering council projects."



Councillor Cammy Day, Depute Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council

Putting the idea to the full council meeting, Cllr Day said: "We are all aware of recent school build quality issues, of contractors going bust, of blacklisting and much, much

more. Many of us will also have read the Cole report telling us that the industry needs to change, no more short cuts and no more disregard for employees' health and safety.

"The Cole report recommendations made it very clear that standards in the construction industry need to be improved and changed. Unite, Unison, GMB and many others are fully supportive of a construction charter to protect their members' rights – and this is the right thing to do.

"This is about protecting workers' rights, about protecting health and safety. We all know that the construction industry has the highest number of deaths in employment and this needs to stop.

"This charter is also about ensuring that contractors pay their fair share, ensuring that national insurance and income tax is duly paid for all employees"

The Conservative Party had lodged an addendum to this motion requiring it to have cross-party consensus. They also wanted to know what the cost implication would be of introducing such a measure.

Cllr McLellan said that Cllr Day was absolutely right to expect the highest standards on all construction sites. He went on to say that the Conservative Group fully supported the motion and wanted workers to be paid what they are legitimately entitled to.

The purpose of the Tory addendum was to ensure that the charter would have as wide support as possible. If it has the support of employers he said this will be embraced positively and not regarded as something of an imposition.

Cllr McLellan said : "Ensuring employer participation in the production of the charter should in fact avoid problems in the procurement processes and also prevent delays in the commencement of works.I see no reason why wider support for

this is not something that the coalition would welcome.”

Cllr Mowat seconded the Conservative position and said : “The thing that is important when we are introducing such a charter is to have the resources to monitor it. We share the desire to deliver the protection for workers but there is no point introducing something that cannot be monitored.”