

ourCity's NOT for sale

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Edinburgh
WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY AGAINST CUTS AND PRIVATISATION

LATEST NEWS ON EDINBURGH COUNCIL PRIVATISATION

Only six months to keep Edinburgh's services public!

The City of Edinburgh Council continues to charge headlong into privatisation of vital services with several key decisions made over the Easter period. The council is seeking to save tens of millions of pounds through privatisation with key jobs and services being placed at risk.

WAS YOUR JOB IN THE PAPER?

If you work in one of the services affected by the privatisation then your job and the service you work in were recently advertised in the European Journal. They're not looking for someone else to do your job - not yet - but the council have asked private companies to apply to deliver council services.

These adverts were placed in March this year and, at the latest count, over 130 private companies had expressed an interest in being your new employer.

GUIDED TOURS

If you think you noticed a drastic increase in the number of important young men in sharp suits with blue tooth head pieces then you might be right. The council recently laid out the

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ARE YOU ONE OF THOSE "CAN-DO" PEOPLE

Sadly in the report to committee

recommending privatisation of council services the Chief Executive observed that "there are concerns about the internal capacity to drive through Improvement".

This begs the question - who are the external experts who are going to re-shape council services if the council managers aren't believed to be up to the task?

Although they helped the council pave the way for privatisation it looks like Ernst & Young are out of the picture. Does the name sound familiar?

If so, it might be from the recent press reports which questioned the role of the USA arm of E&Y in

Continued over

Latest News on Council Privatisation

auditing the accounts of the banking basket case Lehman Brothers.

So it's farewell Ernst & Young and step forward Eversheds.

In answer to the question "who are they?" their website offers the following description - "business lawyers for all corporate, commercial and business legal services." We look forward to testing their knowledge of council services as they steer senior officials to the Brave New World.

Finally, while we don't know how much the consultants will cost we do know two things - the further down the road to privatisation the higher the consultancy bill, and, a council committee recently approved spending up to £1 million on consultants - after topping the Scottish consultants' table at £6.4 million last year.

Just as a comparison, £6.4 million is over two-thirds of the £9 million 'black hole' that led the council to school closure plans in 2007/2008.

UNDER DOG IN CUP SHOCK

In a strange twist of fate Edinburgh City Council received a UK-wide Government Business award for saving money just weeks after the city's Chief Exec dismissed the ability of council staff to cut costs.

The Evening News caught the story and quoted Kevin Duguid saying "Unison has always had faith in the work of our members and we're delighted that this dedication and efficiency has been recognised and rewarded at the highest level.

"It's just a pity that the council sits alone in failing to see that when it

comes to council services in Edinburgh 'public works'. Our message to the leader of the administration is simple: 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'."

NEXT STEPS

The council has circulated brochures advertising the privatisation process to over one hundred companies. We believe that 50 or so turned up for the guided tour or "Bidders Conference".



That top 50 group have to complete a questionnaire to the satisfaction of the judges if they are to stay in this most bizarre Reality TV show.

The questionnaire process is already underway and the results will be out in June.

UNISON has used the negotiation process to set the standard high and in fairness to the council they have said they're only interested in high quality bids.

From July to October the best of the bids will be tested in more detail so the next few months are vital for the future of public services in Edinburgh.

UNISON believes that city council staff provide great services, and we know from the recent award that members know how to tackle waste and inefficiency.

We are determined to show that the in-house option is the best option - for quality and for price - and most of all accountability?



KEEPING SERVICES IN-HOUSE

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The council has promised to maintain investment in improvement plans for the current services. UNISON welcomes that commitment and we will give council managers our full support in taking the organisation forward as a public service. The key decisions are made as early as October so you have six months to save public services in Edinburgh.

The council has the legal right to abandon privatisation at any stage and we aim to prove that for efficient and effective services there is no need to look further than existing staff - the public sector option.

For more information on the campaign or to volunteer to defend jobs and services please contact the branch or visit the website.

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