

Transport Review Update

Following union representation the consultation period for the Transport Review has been extended by two weeks till the 3rd April. We are still awaiting proposals for the road workers rota, winter gritting and the permanent employment of staff from the capital budget. In reality it may need to be extended again.

Road Workers

Reports suggest that Edinburgh's roads have a repair backlog running in to hundreds of millions of pounds, that a temporary repair team has been created and what the press call the worst roads in Scotland.

UNISON therefore finds it incredible that the council are paying skilled roads staff to leave the council and then issue contracts to private contractors.

Despite a 2 year review, which had the support of the councillors, pointing the direction of travel towards increasing the size of the in-house roads team to bid for additional work the transformation team have only sought to reduce the staffing levels to cut the wage bill and privatise the work.

Shift Patterns

The proposal to change the remaining road workers from week days to a 4 on 4 off shift makes very little sense.

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This cost cutting measure requires a lot more detail to be provided to show how this will work in practise and what effect it will have on the winter gritting.

When we feel there are enough proposals and a full explanation of how this will work we will consult with the depot staff to see what action is required.

There are fears that there will not be enough staff to cover all the revenue budget never mind touching the capital works. It would not be farfetched to believe these proposals could lead to the demise of the in house service and privatisation.

Infrastructure & Network Staff

The reduction in permanent design staff is also a major concern. Again we are paying experienced staff to leave the council only to replace them with staff on temporary contracts.

It appears to be more important to get permanent staff off the revenue budget and replace them with temporary contracts on the capital budget.

Keeping good experienced permanent staff which is beneficial for the service and cheaper than a succession of temporary contracts. UNISON will continue to fight for this to be overturned and stop the council moving away from permanent staff.

Already there are fears, even as staff numbers are being reduced, that temporary staff are required because of the lack of permanent staff.

Senior Staff

The reduction in the senior engineers and senior transport team leader from 32.5 to 21 f.t.e. and the transport managers from 20 to 11 is in total, almost a 40% cut in staff.

There are not many organisations that could deal with this size of cut, never mind most of it happening over a few weeks. This has come about not because it's the ideal structure for transport but that it protects money for the private contractors to repair roads. Only time will tell if this is a gamble that will work.

Health & Safety

Concerns have been raised regarding the health and safety of road workers following the proposal to cut the number of team leaders from 30 to 11.

UNISON is working on a submission for the review.