

## Item no 5.2

### QUESTION NO 2

**By Councillor Jim Campbell for  
answer by the Convener of the  
Transport and Environment  
Committee at a meeting of the  
Council on 23 August 2018**

Regarding the Council's ill considered proposal to call residents to ask for £25 payment for the Garden Waste Tax, can you confirm:

**Question** (1) When first you became aware of the potential for fraud and the breach of good practice?

**Answer** (1)

**Question** (2) On what date the process was changed, so that the Council would not place calls asking for payment, but only accept payments on inbound calls?

**Answer** (2)

**Question** (3) Explain why it took so long to close this potential security breach, when the exact nature of this issue was highlighted to senior Officer as early as 22 June\*.

\* text of email sent to Senior Officers and copied to Director, 22 June:

I was keen to catch a word with you today regarding the proposed process for collecting the fee for garden waste.

As I understand it, residents will get a letter explaining that they need to contact us to have T&Cs sent out, which they need to agree to these Ts&Cs and return a signed copy, at which point we will call them to take payment over the phone.

Leaving aside the inefficiency of this process, it seems to me to be fundamentally flawed in terms of security.

I think it is safe to assume that it will be no secret that residents in Edinburgh will be expected to pay a known amount to a known payee over a known period.

**Question**

- (3)** \*\*I have drafted a script that a malicious caller could use below. How can residents check the validity of a caller, given all the key information is public?

I understand that we do have an opinion that this is a compliment process. Can this opinion be shared?

As it stands, I don't see how I could advise any constituent to do other than decline to make any payment to CEC over the phone after receiving a call, but instead suggested they call CEC back using the number on the letter to make payment.

Your thoughts would be appreciated.

I apologise if I have not gained an accurate understanding of the process. I am surprised that these letters are now going out, and that we are already receiving contact from constituents on what they need to do, before any briefing has been made or offered to Members.

Kind Regards

*\*\*A draft script was outlined in the question to highlight the risk of fraud and this has been redacted for security reasons.*

**Answer**

**(3)**