

ITEM No 3.2(a)

From: UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch [<mailto:branchoffice@unison-edinburgh.org.uk>]  
Sent: 21 June 2010 15:20  
To: Carmel Riley  
Subject: REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION - FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE 24TH JUNE 2010

Dear Carmel

UNISON would wish to make representation to the Full Council Committee scheduled on Thursday 24th June 2010 on Agenda Item 8.1 which relates to Alternative Business Models Programme. The representation will be made by Kevin Duguid and Peter Hunter who will be present in the City Chambers at 9.45. Should you require their presence earlier please advise Monica Niven at the Unison Branch Office on [monica@unison-edinburgh.org.uk](mailto:monica@unison-edinburgh.org.uk)

Agnes Petkevicius  
Branch Secretary  
UNISON City of Edinburgh Branch

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## UNISON SUBMISSION ON ALTERNATIVE BUSINESS MODELS PROGRAMME REPORT

UNISON, believes that the process and the findings described in Alternative Business Models Programme Report are fundamentally flawed and I set out below our comments on the report :

3.2 , 3.3 & 3.4 - Procurement in local government must be managed in accordance with guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers (the section 52 guidance) and the guidance requires open access to information and full engagement with trade unions. The access and engagement requirements apply, inter alia, to the Pre-qualifying questionnaire procedure where trade unions are entitled to contribute to the assessment process .The aforementioned information was not made available to us prior to the conclusion of the assessment process and we have therefore had NO involvement or input which we believe puts the Council in breach of the Section 52 guidance.

3.5 – We have serious concerns over the shortlisting of a number of the organisations our concerns include :

- i) A number of them ( up to 5 ) have been implicated in and fined for Price Fixing of Contracts in the Public Sector.
- ii) Another is currently involved in an infrasture project on behalf of the government of Israel in the occupied Palestinian Territories.The Council has a longstanding commitment to support a Free Palestinian State.
- iii) Another is subject of a complaint to the Office of Fair Trading for alledged overcharging in another Public Sector Contract
- iv) Another has been the subject of a recent takeover bid and this offers us concern over job security for staff..
- v) Another was part of the Infamous Edinburgh Trams Project.
- vi) Many of them have also been found guilty of Health & Safety breaches which have resulted in death and injury.

This list is indicative of issues which are in the Public Domain yet we have been denied the opportunity to scrutinize their PQQ documents and examine what safeguards they are putting in place or have put in place to avoid a repetition of these difficulties.

3.6 - You are being asked to commit to further progression of this project and by default an investment of hundreds of thousands of pounds when there are so many question marks and risks associated with this project.

You are being asked to approve this spend without having had the opportunity to scrutins the documentation – you would not do this with any other project.

3.7 to 3.10 - A programme Healthcheck has been completed along with a plan for addressing issues that arose from it.

The Trade Union Side have had no involvement in the “Healthcheck” or subsequent “plan” and have not even been forwarded a copy of either of these and there is no commitment given that we will get any of the above in the future.

We believe that this also puts the Council in Breach of the Section 52 Guidance.

3.19 to 3.25 - The work in developing “the Public Sector Comparator” or Service Improvement Plans has been underinvested in both financially and resource wise.

The in house option is not and has not been working on a level playing field , indeed in 3.22 there is a recommendation that “teams use external advisory support sparingly to facilitate and provide challenge to their work. At this stage it is recommended that a budget of €150k is established from which the teams can bid for resource.”

This only equates to 10% of the total spend .

UNISON had suggested the council use APSE ( Association for Public Sector Excellence) to whom they are an affiliate but this was rejected yet APSE have a proven track record in such projects and would cost significantly less than other external consultants in this field.

The inhouse option now faces an uphill battle to due to the failure to resource and start this work timeously.

3.26 to 3.28 - By and large weekly meetings have taken place , whether they could all be described as constructive is clearly a point of some dispute when we have , effectively ,been excluded from so many of the areas we believe we have a right to be consulted on.

As yet we still await detail of the development of internal service improvement plans and we are unaware of any strategy of communication to staff who have continually sought information from ourselves.

3.29 & 3.30 – We have had no discussion over Shared Services in relation to this project or any detailed information relating to a Shared Services Agenda outwith this project.

We have also spoken to colleagues from other UNISON Branches and they have also not been involved in consultation with regard to Shared Services .

4.1 to 4.5 – The Financial implications for agreeing this Report are huge ,in the current economic climate , and we believe cannot be justified given the massive risks , the failure to adhere to Section52 Guidance and the lack of scrutiny by either the Trade Unions or you as Elected members because of the failure to provide the information contained in the PQQ documents.

We will expand on the above during our deputation at The Full Council Meeting.

Kevin Duguid  
Service Conditions Co-ordinator  
UNISON  
City of Edinburgh Branch