UCATT

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

UCATT (Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians) is the largest specialist union for construction workers in Scotland and across the UK and Ireland, with members in both the public and private sectors. UCATT is the lead union among the signatories to the National Working Rule Agreement of the Construction Industry Joint Council and the Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Craft and Associated Employees. UCATT is represented on a number of specialised industry bodies by the Scottish Secretary including; Construction Scotland, Construction Skills, Scottish Building and Apprenticeship Training Council, The Cross Party Group for Construction.

Committee Questions:
UCATT wishes to make certain brief points rather than answer each question individually.

1. UCATT was never made aware of the initial consultation with Transport Scotland. Consequently we did not participate in the engagement with stakeholders.

2. Our interest is in the potential for jobs, those currently existing, and the creation of new jobs as the maintenance of both the existing bridge and new crossing is examined. This should be seen as an opportunity to support the Scottish economy.

3. It seems that the potential to retain Forth Estuary Transport Authority (FETA) has been dismissed by the Scottish Government in the name of efficiency savings, and the establishment of a single operating company, all but agreed. FETA was a not for profit company and enshrined democratic accountability, by having a board with elected representatives making decisions. Clearly, the decision to privatise the operation of the bridge management and maintenance will end this culture and organisation.

4. The Bill establishes that upon the dissolution of FETA, the property, rights, and liabilities transfer to the Scottish Government. UCATT has members working for FETA at this minute and their concern is about jobs, terms and conditions and pensions. They require clarity on their own position. UCATT notes with interest that the Scottish Government will have responsibility for the contract, which will begin in 2015; our members are concerned about the length of the contract and require stability in employment.

5. UCATT expects that our members’ terms and conditions, and pay, will be protected under TUPE regulations. Furthermore, on reading the Bill, the members’ pension entitlement and contributions to the Lothian
Pension Fund (LPF) Scheme will continue. UCATT agrees with the Scottish Government that any company seeking to win any contract to operate the contract must guarantee that access to the pension scheme remains as is for employees, by establishing admitted body status with the LPF.

6. UCATT is also concerned that the private company seeking to deliver the contract, should not be any company that has been found to engage in the insidious practice of Blacklisting, of which some roads companies have had involvement. This should be clearly set out in the procurement document. By the same token, no company that operates aggressive, immoral tax avoidance schemes, through payroll companies or other methods, should be considered for this contract.

7. In conclusion, we would like to be kept informed of the progress of the Bill, and be advised of potential contractors, which would enable UCATT to set up dialogue and foster a working relationship with any new company.

UCATT
1 February 2013