

What I Want for Edinburgh – Margo McDonald MSP

✘ by Margo McDonald MSP

As the General Holyrood Election looms ever larger, expect to hear “It’s the economy, stupid!” from every party trying to win seats in the Scottish Parliament. The irony is that with only the economic powers suggested by the Calman Commission, or even the Fiscal Autonomy favoured by the SNP, our ability to optimise on Scotland’s potential is curtailed by the strategic decisions being left to Westminster...that will become the parliament of England, an economy requiring quite different treatment from the differently sized and structured Scottish economy.

As Edinburgh is one of the most important drivers of the Scottish economy, the extent and quality of our public services cannot fail to be affected. That’s why I’ve tried to have Scotland’s capital seen as having unique responsibilities and needs when The Scottish Government allocates resources.

For example, Edinburgh’s roads are dreadful. But what else is to be expected of roads that were built to the same spec as elsewhere, but that have been used by increasingly greater numbers of vehicles as the city adopted more and more of the responsibilities of a capital city. Although the City Council has improved its practice in dealing with potholes, for example, this winter’s snow damage will take years to be dealt with, so I’ve tried to secure an extra amount for Edinburgh in the Budget, because of the importance of the capital’s transport systems for Scotland as well as Edinburgh people.

Another big question that has to be faced in the city is the future number and size of schools. Parents are coming round to an acceptance of the need to stop paying money to keep

underused classrooms maintained, when money for public services is so tight. I'd like to see an Education Commission for Edinburgh scope out the most economical provision of Education...and the optimum standards for our pupils and students.