

Jobcentre to stay open in city centre says MP Lazarowicz

✘ Mark Lazarowicz MP for Edinburgh North and Leith has been told by Jobcentre Plus that for the moment at least it is not going ahead with plans to close the Edinburgh City Centre Jobcentre in South St Andrew Street.

When the proposals were announced in July, Mark led calls for a rethink.

He said: -“I am glad to hear that following the public consultation Jobcentre Plus has shelved plans for this year at least to close the South St Andrew Street office.

“But the government’s long-term plans to sell off property including offices could still lead to closures in the future which could even go beyond the present plans. This should be regarded as a warning rather than a complete reprieve. At a time when unemployment in Edinburgh is rising fast and at a higher rate than for Scotland in general, these plans could mean a poorer service when the need for help and advice is sharply increasing.”

Over the last year, the number of JSA claimants in Edinburgh rose by 9% whereas in Scotland as a whole the increase was 8% – and that’s far too high, said Mark.

At surgeries and meetings with local organisations, Mark has been hearing recurrent concerns about redundancies, cuts in

public spending and the consequent squeeze on budgets, whether of organisations or individual households.

In the face of the financial crisis the last Labour Government set aside extra funding for Jobcentre Plus to enable it to offer a more personalised service.

The current UK Government has stressed its aim is to get the long term unemployed back to work but those who have been out of work longest often need the most support if they are to find work.