

First Minister making speech in London tonight

✘ The First Minister is set to tell a London audience tonight that independence is the key to Scotland's future economic growth.

Alex Salmond is expected to tell a capacity crowd at the London School of Economics (LSE) that Scotland would thrive economically post-independence – and will give the 400-strong gathering six practical examples of steps that could be taken, by an independent Scotland with control of fiscal policy within a Sterling monetary union.

The First Minister is expected to say that the critical measures to promote Scotland's economy can only be taken when full fiscal control rests in Edinburgh rather than at Westminster.

Mr Salmond is set to identify six specific measures that an independent Scottish administration needs to boost economic growth:

- Responsibility for taxation to support specific economic sectors, such as the computer games industry
- Greater control over investment in energy to secure Scotland's future
- Borrowing powers to stimulate capital investment
- Corporation tax, as a lever to encourage investment and support extra jobs
- Air passenger duty, to help encourage further direct routes and thus stimulate tourism and the economy
- The ability to properly reflect different social spending priorities from those of the UK Government

The First Minister is expected to tell the audience this evening:

“The economic case for Scottish independence is absolutely clear, and the critical measures that need to be taken to boost the economy, create jobs and build a fairer society can only be taken when we have full financial control resting in Edinburgh rather than at Westminster.

“Full responsibility for fiscal policy while remaining within a common Sterling currency area will give Scotland the maximum degree of flexibility and control of the key financial levers we need to take the decisions best suited to our own economic interests.

“With responsibility for taxation, including corporation tax, we will be able to target support to specific areas and industries, such as our vast energy sector or the computer games industry, where Scotland has a real edge on international competitors in terms of cutting-edge innovation.

“Air passenger duty is another example – a tool we could use to help encourage direct air links with the rest of the world and thus stimulate tourism and economic growth. The Calman Commission recommended that Scotland should have responsibility for air passenger duty but so far the UK government has not agreed to devolve this tool.

“Capital investment is something that we are already using to stimulate economic growth here in Scotland. But our powers are extremely limited and right now we have no borrowing powers whatsoever – with the same borrowing powers as other nations we would help stimulate further economic growth in Scotland.

“Scotland is not immune from current global economic challenges. But once we are equipped with the same powers that independent countries around the world take for granted we will be very well placed to thrive economically in the years to come.”