

How is our city's economy performing? Councillor Ross has the answers



Ahead of the City Chambers live Question Time event, the Economy Convener, Councillor Frank Ross writes to explain the budget challenges for the city's Economic Development department for which he is responsible.

Councillor Ross is the SNP councillor for Corstorphine/Murrayfield Ward and has a background in business. The Edinburgh Reporter interviewed him about the city's economy in April of this year:

He writes:

Edinburgh is the most prosperous city in the UK outside London and is always coming top of the ratings for quality of life. This is largely due to our strong economy and continuing to build on this is at the heart of our Strategy for Jobs.

The way we communicate and do business globally is changing and if we are to continue to compete on an international stage for investment and talented workers, we must ensure our current workforce is ready to adapt to new skills, which requires our continued investment.

Edinburgh's technology sector has a real buzz about it, which was highlighted recently by Tech Britain, who recently announced it is the third largest in the UK. Our world class universities are turning out talented graduates every year and many of them are joining businesses in the city or setting up their own. To keep the industry growing at or ahead of its current rate, we need to increase the flow of fresh talent

coming into Edinburgh.

On a local level we are working with partners across the city in many training centres such as Fort Kinnaird, an innovative recruitment and skills centre which opened in the shopping centre there in September 2013. After a year of opening, the centre, which is run in conjunction with many other partners, has exceeded all expectations. Almost all of the Fort Kinnaird retailers that recruited for Christmas positions did so through the Centre, resulting in 380 local jobseekers securing work.

Over a third of those placed continued into permanent jobs with their employers. This is a fantastic result, particularly as it is providing much needed employment to people in areas of higher job seeker claimant levels such as Craigmillar.

We are also continuing to invest in our incubators to nurture entrepreneurial start-up talent in the city. Creative Exchange, wholly owned by the Council is now full and others are expanding rapidly. In face of this demand we are looking at innovative options for incubator expansion.

Ensuring that Edinburgh's young people have opportunities is also vital for economic success. More than one in every hundred full-time equivalent employees in the Council is now an apprentice and since the Edinburgh Guarantee launched two and a half years ago it has supported over 1,000 young people into employment training or further education. The Edinburgh Guarantee has also helped 200 employers in the last financial year giving young people new opportunities.

There is much to do to keep our economy growing and the increasing demands that this places on the Council, so when it comes to allocating next year's budget we must get it right. It is important that we ensure that everyone has the opportunity to find work and has a good quality of life. That is why we are urging people to play their part in our budget

decisions, so please have a look at our [budget planner](#) and let us know your priorities.

Join in the debate this evening from 7:00pm till 8:00pm using the Twitter hashtag #edinbudget or by watching the proceedings [live online here.](#)