

#Edinburgh2050 Rutherford's Edinburgh

Hugh
view
on



In the latest edition of the #Edinburgh2050 blog series, Hugh Rutherford tells us about the Edinburgh Business Forum's involvement in creating a vision for the city...

Mr Rutherford is Chair of Edinburgh Business Forum which aims to support the council in delivering its Strategy for Jobs, the five year plan launched in 2012. Under this scheme the goals are to encourage inward investment into the capital and to help the unemployed into work or learning.

The Edinburgh Business Forum, in conjunction with The City of Edinburgh Council, hosted a conversation with Edinburgh's key business sectors to ascertain their ideas and thoughts on the proposed new City Vision-2050. This conversation is but one of a series of such events being carried out to engage with residents, businesses and the institutions of the city, allowing everyone to have a say on what Edinburgh's City Vision should include.

Mr Rutherford explained: "A number of important points emerged from discussions, and it is hoped that more detailed discussions and outcomes will emerge as the business communities respond to the Council's excellent initiative.

"Successful City Visions have benefitted from having cross-party support at all levels, including political level, as well as drawing on broad long term themes which can be adjusted over time and continue to develop and evolve to meet a city's needs in a highly competitive global world. The City Vision should have deliverable outcomes and requires a binding

mechanism to drive real changes, with most City Visions often being orphaned at the point at publication.

“Our City Vision needs to lead change in the city, where often plans tend to reflect, rather than drive real change.

“It was agreed that Edinburgh should play to its strengths as an increasingly knowledge-based service economy and as a capital city and major tourism destination. The city’s universities, colleges and schools require to collaborate with business to ensure the right skill sets (both in terms of initial training and retraining) are developed in line with needs.

“It is important that Edinburgh retains more of the talent it develops, since with an ageing population, this will be key to growing the city and will contribute significantly to the local and national economy. The business community has a responsibility to work with youngsters to inspire them, and this was felt to be something that could be undertaken immediately. The city needs to be fit for people of all age groups.

“Key sectors of the economy where Edinburgh excels such as technology, bio/medical sciences, tourism, financial services, food & drink and professional services should all be nurtured, and collaborate across each other.

“The third sector who were present emphasised the need for greater overall inclusion, which is a huge issue with Edinburgh having deep polarisation between wealth and deprivation. We need to tackle our local social problems in a way that has a global impact.

“Edinburgh has a number of social enterprise firsts and this sectors requires to be developed further within the Edinburgh economy. The key things we need to focus on going forward with our City Vision are inspiration, education, aspiration and opportunity.

“Edinburgh’s growth is constrained by geographical space, and it was felt that Edinburgh needed to use its space better. Examples from Edinburgh’s evolution emphasised the opportunities within a World Heritage Site with beautiful skyline and vistas. Edinburgh is an astounding place of innovation and technology, but there is a feeling that we need to inspire and engage the next generation to build on skills and momentum. We need to promote our successes more.

“We heard from the tourism industry that one of Edinburgh’s key attributes beyond its culture, heritage and city vistas is its safety record for global tourists, which should not be underestimated and should be emphasised more in marketing campaigns. Other than safety, quality was seen as another successful factor with authenticity and the character of its residents which are all key to future success. Edinburgh needs to be a city that is great to live, work and visit.”

You can have your say on the City Vision [here](#).