

Businesses say 'no' to tourism tax



Edinburgh at night from Calton Hill looking towards the Castle. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

Edinburgh businesses are firmly opposed to the City of Edinburgh Council's plans to introduce a tourism tax to the city.

That's the verdict in a survey of city businesses by The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) which says that 76 per cent of businesses are against the tax.

And 73 per cent believe that it would have a negative impact on the local economy.

Visitors spend £1.46b each year in Edinburgh, supporting around 34,800 jobs.

Janet Torley, area leader for the FSB in the East of Scotland, said: "This is a wake-up call for the City of Edinburgh Council.

"Plans to introduce a tourism tax in the city are unwanted and

potentially damaging.

“Edinburgh is at the heart of Scotland’s tourist industry. It is our most visited city, it has our busiest airport, and it is home to some of our most iconic landmarks.

“Edinburgh’s success as a magnet for international tourists is vital to the economic health of visitor economies right across the country.

“If we tax tourists out of Edinburgh, then we risk taxing them out of Scotland, damaging the prospects of small local businesses throughout Scotland and threatening jobs.”

She added: “Edinburgh must value its tourists, not price them out. At a time when the City of Edinburgh Council is working hard to harness the economic potential of new direct air services linking the capital to China, it is ironic that it seems to be carrying on regardless with plans to penalise these tourists and local accommodation providers.”