

Councillor grills tour company over employees

A councillor has hit out at directors of a walking tour over the treatment of workers.

Labour councillor Scott Arthur grilled the director of tour company Edbabel Ltd, Alberto Ruggeri, as he applied to the council's licensing sub-committee for permission to sell tickets on the Royal Mile.

Mr Ruggeri said that most of his tours were free, except a new tour of Edinburgh Castle – so he required a street trading licence for people to purchase tickets.

After fellow Labour Cllr Lezley Marion Cameron asked for assurances about the business model for the tours, Cllr Arthur questioned the tour boss further.



Councillor Scott Arthur

He said: "It appears that what you are doing is not really employing people – they are working for tips.

"You're employing people with no pay and no conditions and you are taking a proportion of those tips."

Mr Ruggeri said that workers 'keep all the tips for themselves' and that the company had increased turnover for each of the last four years.

Bill Cameron from The Old Town Community Council objected to the application, labelling the walking tours as 'a nuisance'.

He said: "It's currently a loss of amenity to local people. Until such time as there's regulation in place, we think this would be setting a precedent.

"They are a nuisance and having more obstruction on the Royal Mile is certainly not the way to go."

Councillors agreed to allow the company to sell tickets on the High Street – but insisted that tours must be capped at a maximum of 25 people to alleviate fears of congestion.

Licensing Convener, Cllr Cathy Fullerton said: “While I have sympathy for the objection, I think we need to encourage people to apply for a licences so we can have control and impose conditions.”