

# Business Comment

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2024

**Economy & Resilience**





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**smart of Edinburgh**  
12 Edinburgh Rd, Newbridge, EH28 8QW



## Economy & Resilience

Welcome to Business Comment.

We are delighted to welcome City of Edinburgh Council leader Cammy Day as a contributor in this issue, and he strikes a positive note. Councillor Day challenges those who might view the Capital through a pessimistic lens and reminds us that there is much of merit happening in our city. He points to the opening of Edinburgh St James, and to the significant investments being made in some of our historic buildings to restore them to useful life – such as the Johnnie Walker Centre or one of the many luxury hotels planned and opening along Princes Street, and expresses his excitement around the potential that he sees coming from the imminent introduction of the Visitor Levy.

In terms of the private sector, the work continues to help the city deliver on its potential. It is good to know there is an enormous amount of work being done by Forth Ports to achieve net zero emissions by 2032 in its operations, which in turn support around an enormous part of Scotland and the UK’s trade and logistics. It is fascinating and impressive to note that around 95% of our trade goes through the nation’s ports. We remain an island nation, after all. Forth Ports is a long-standing and much valued part of the economy of our city region and beyond, and Chief Executive Stuart Wallace remains firmly committed to ensuring the Forth Green Freeport will play an essential role in helping Scotland enjoy maximum benefits from a Green Economy.

Our city is not without challenges, of course, and Cyrenians Chief Executive is one of the Capital’s most passionate advocates on preventing homelessness. As ever, his piece illustrates the scale of the problem, but also reminds us that the issue is not one of bricks and mortar, but of human lives devastated. It’s an issue that hurts our economy too, not simply in terms of the funds spent on dealing with its symptoms, but in the opportunity cost – so many people being denied the opportunity to meet their potential and contribute.

Meantime, there is much to read and enjoy in the magazine. The industry and innovation of our members never ceases to amaze!



**Liz McAreavey**  
Chief Executive,  
Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce

20

The University of Edinburgh: Maximising Impact



22

Preventing Homelessness in Edinburgh: Tackling The Housing Emergency



Chamber News	04 - 05
Member Spotlight	06
Chamber News	07
Corporate View	08
In Conversation With	10 - 11
Business Support	12
Corporate View	13
New Members	16
60 Seconds With   Get With IT	18
Special Reports	20 - 23
Chamber Training	24 - 25
Chamber Events	26
Chamber Partners	28 - 36
Policy Update	37
Edinburgh’s Newcomers	38





## Bupa Launches ‘Let’s Get Growing’ Campaign with Rationale to Boost SME Growth through Health and Wellbeing Support

Bupa UK Insurance is launching a major brand campaign aimed at the UK’s 1.5m small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SME)<sup>1</sup> with employees, to show how proactive health and wellbeing support is key to achieving growth ambitions with a team that is more productive, resilient and motivated.

B2B brand and content agency Rationale has undertaken Bupa’s first brand-building campaign specifically targeted at SMEs, spearheading an always-on, through-the-funnel programme of activity. It stretches across addressable TV, CTV, digital radio and podcast advertising, out of home (targeting business commuters and trade SMEs in transport hubs and on arterial business routes) and is supported by paid social media activity on LinkedIn and Meta. A forthcoming partnership has also been established with The Times.

‘Let’s Get Growing’ features happy and healthy small business teams at the top of their game, driving key moments of business growth such as expansion, winning new clients, meeting increased demand and performing under pressure. The campaign showcases businesses across a range of sectors, representing the diversity of UK SMEs and Bupa’s customers. Its hero campaign film can be viewed on Vimeo here.

The campaign team identified that many SMEs need a partner to help support their employees’ health and wellbeing and tackle

challenges such as presenteeism, burnout and staff turnover. These held team performance back and ultimately stifled business growth.

Analysis of Bupa’s current SME customers revealed they have been three times more likely to experience more than 30% revenue growth in two years, compared to the average performance of small businesses in the UK.

Daniel Sullivan, Director of B2B Marketing, Proposition & Product Delivery at Bupa UK Insurance, said: “This campaign marks an important milestone for Bupa B2B, representing our biggest ever push to help SMEs realise their growth potential by finding a partner who can support the health and wellbeing of their people, and realise the benefits of workplace healthcare. SMEs are the backbone of the British economy and we want to make sure they have the happy, healthy people they need to support their growth ambitions.

“Whether providing fast access to GPs, comprehensive mental health support or HR advice and resources for business owners, Bupa is committed to keeping

SME teams at their best and ready to grow,” he added.

Co-founder and Managing Director of Edinburgh-based Rationale, Rowan Morrison, said: “Rationale is incredibly excited about our role in bringing the ‘Let’s Get Growing’ campaign to life. It is an excellent demonstration of our ongoing strategic and creative partnership with Bupa, and we’re proud of what we have achieved by working so closely with the Bupa B2B team.

“At Rationale, we support our clients to create more valuable connections with their customers; and with the ‘Let’s Get Growing’ proposition we feel we are speaking directly to the needs and ambitions of Bupa’s SME audience. The potential for these businesses to benefit from health insurance has been a huge motivating factor for us in creating a campaign that resonates,” she continued.

Working alongside Rationale to deliver the campaign is media agency Initiative; marketing consultancy Stick & Twist; film production agency Lost Clock; and photographer Harrison Reid.

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2023/business-population-estimates-for-the-uk-and-regions-2023-statistical-release>

# Foreign Direct Investment: Edinburgh is the most Attractive Destination Outside London & South East

Edinburgh has overtaken Greater Manchester as the most attractive location in the UK outside of London for foreign direct investment (FDI), according to a new study.



**Fraser Gillies**  
Advisor & Planner,  
WJM Solicitors

City	Growth Potential	Local Skills	Local Infrastructure	Overall Score	YoY Ranking Change
Inner London	35	114.7	66.3	72	0
London	33.3	110.7	61.5	68.5	0
Outer London	17.3	107.6	58.9	61.3	0
Brighton	47.7	34	44	41.9	0
Oxford	6.7	39.6	72.4	39.6	0
<b>City of Edinburgh</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>2</b>
Birmingham	28	38.6	46.8	37.8	0
Greater Manchester	-1.1	68	42.2	36.4	-2
Manchester	18.1	38.6	47	34.5	0
Cambridge	1.5	33.3	66.9	33.9	0

Produced by law firms Wright, Johnston & Mackenzie (WJM) and Irwin Mitchell, the Investment Attractiveness Index has been compiled by a team of experts at the Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr), who have analysed the UK’s 50 largest cities according to eight indicators related to Growth Potential, Local Infrastructure, and Local Skills.\*

According to the report, Edinburgh has climbed two places to secure the sixth position. However, its overall attractiveness score is 5.7 points lower than the previous year. This decline aligns with the trend observed in most of the other 50 cities analysed. The reduction in the overall score is primarily attributed to a decrease in Growth Potential, driven by lower predicted GVA growth in 2024 compared to 2023.

Despite this, the report reveals Edinburgh performed impressively in the Local Skills pillar having the highest score out of all 50 locations for qualification levels.

Glasgow also performs well in the study. Although like Edinburgh its attractiveness score fell, it moved up the rankings into 11th place, rising by four places. Aberdeen is some distance behind in 39th place but has increased its relative position by three places boosted improvements in the Local Skills pillar, where it rose two places to now rank 12th.

Commenting on the finding, Fraser Gillies, managing partner at WJM, said: “We spelled out some concerns last year about investment levels in Scotland from overseas, so it is encouraging to see

Edinburgh is back on the rise. From my perspective, I can only hope that other city hubs such as Glasgow and Aberdeen soon follow suit.

“Often working in the city, it is clear to see Edinburgh’s strength lies in its infrastructure, skilled workforce, and competitive marketplace across the financial services industry, with over 30,000 people working in the sector.

“With a sophisticated supply chain and a growing specialism in financial technology (fintech), it’s no surprise to me that it has again become such an attractive proposition for investors.

“Edinburgh offers interested parties a strong regional presence and allows diversification north of the border, something we have been keen to press with our new partnership with Irwin Mitchell. Indeed, Scotland, overall, lies second only to London for the ninth consecutive year in terms of FDI projects\*\*.

“This news, which shows a record number of 142 FDI projects in 2023, only emboldens the sector, and we would expect Edinburgh to grow in confidence and stature in the coming years and continue leading the way for the nation.”

Bryan Bletso partner and Head of International at Irwin Mitchell, said:

“The results in our report point to challenging conditions and mirror the sentiment amongst both businesses and overseas investors that we are speaking to.

“Edinburgh excels in the pillars of Local Skills and Local Infrastructure, ranking 5th in each. On an indicator level, the Scottish capital ties with Oxford for 1st place in the qualification levels indicator and boasts a large economically active population, ranking in the top 10.

“It has also seen significant improvement in online connectivity over the year, which, combined with high public transport usage, makes it an attractive investment destination based on the education levels of locals and the presence of reliable digital and physical infrastructure.”

FDI refers to investments made by foreign investors in a company located in a different country. It can take the form of greenfield investments or Mergers & Acquisitions. In 2021, the UK’s inward FDI position was £2,002 billion, slightly higher than the previous year’s £1,919 billion.

According to EY’s 2024 UK Attractiveness Survey, the US has remained the single biggest originator of FDI projects, accounting for 27 projects or 19% of Scotland’s total during the year — the lowest proportion in the past decade. Projects from Germany doubled to 20, a decade high, making it the second-biggest source of projects into Scotland, followed by France with 10.

Three Scottish cities ranked in the UK’s top 10 urban locations for FDI outside of London, as Edinburgh is placed second with 32 projects, Glasgow fourth with 25 projects, and Aberdeen eighth with 13 projects.



**Ola Wojtkiewicz**  
Executive Director,  
Creative Edinburgh

## Championing the Creative Industries

Creative Edinburgh is the local charity playing a crucial role in advocating for the creative sector in Edinburgh and Scotland.

As Creative Edinburgh, we bring together creative thinkers and makers across the city. Through events, career development and advocacy, we support the city's creative community, providing an inclusive space for collaboration and connection at every stage of their career. With a particular focus on freelancers and small startups, we act as a voice for this fragmented casual workforce in front of the government and funding bodies where their message is so often missing. As a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation, we are constantly looking for support and partnerships that can help us to connect people and collect the information to continue to be that crucial voice.

Our ongoing advocacy efforts include engagement with Culture Counts, Creative UK, Brand Scotland, Scottish Creative Networks and Creative Industries Leadership Group within the Scottish Government, where we have contributed to research and supported advocacy efforts.

Ola Wojtkiewicz, Executive Director, has also been a key advocate in the City of Edinburgh Council's Just Economic Transition group,

which was chaired by the Chamber, working to directly influence policies that improve working conditions and career prospects for freelancers in the creative sector.

Our current involvement in the Culture Fair Work Taskforce offers a significant opportunity to advocate for freelancers' perspectives in national debates on fair work. As the Creative Edinburgh representative, Ola will attend seven meetings this year alone, contributing to recommendations for the Scottish Government and partners to promote Fair Work in the cultural sector.

Strategic meetings with Scottish Government officials, local authorities, and Creative Scotland are essential for keeping our community informed and building positive relationships. For instance, Ola recently presented project outcomes supported by the City of Edinburgh Council at the Culture & Communities Committee and participated in cross-party Culture & Communities Committees at the Scottish Parliament, discussing the role of culture in communities, fair pay, and volunteering.

Our participation in the "Connections

and Partnerships: The Value of Culture in Communities" conference, organised by the Scottish Government and COSLA, highlights our commitment to demonstrating culture's role in community development. We have advocated for the inclusion of freelance creative practitioners in future events and offered to facilitate connections with our members to expand the impact of major policy initiatives.

"As we continue to advance, Creative Edinburgh is dedicated to nurturing existing relationships and exploring new advocacy opportunities. Through our ongoing efforts and strategic engagements, we remain at the forefront of supporting the creative community, ensuring that creative voices are heard and their contributions are recognised," said Ola Wojtkiewicz, Executive Director, Creative Edinburgh.

As a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation, our work is supported by a number of means including partnerships and collaborative initiatives. If you, or your organisation, would like to support the creative community of Edinburgh, we'd love to talk! Get in touch: [ola@creative-edinburgh.com](mailto:ola@creative-edinburgh.com).

# New CEO takes the helm of The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust for the first time in 26 years

Rear Admiral Neil Rankin CB CBE, Chairman of The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust, has announced the appointment of their new Chief Executive: Franck Bruyère, 45. Mr Bruyère will replace Mr Bob Downie when he retires later this year after 26 years at the helm of the award-winning maritime attraction Britannia and its sister-ship, the luxury floating hotel Fingal.

Mr Bruyère is currently the Trust's Director of Hospitality and brings over 25 years' global hospitality management experience to his new role. His passion for hospitality and a 'people first' approach has taken him around the world, working for some of the most iconic and renowned hotels, including Renaissance Worthington, USA; InterContinental Paris Le Grand; Fairmont Monte Carlo; Fairmont St Andrews; and The Caledonian Edinburgh.

More recently, before joining the Trust, Mr Bruyère also played a key role in the pre-opening and opening team of St James Quarter, Edinburgh's retail and lifestyle destination, where he was Director of Operations and Sustainability Strategy.

Commenting on Mr Bruyère's appointment, Chairman of The Royal Yacht Britannia Trust, Rear Admiral Neil Rankin CB CBE, said:

"After a rigorous and thorough search, the Board of Trustees are confident that in Franck Bruyère we have found a very worthy successor to Bob Downie, who has been at the heart of Britannia's outstanding success as a leading visitor attraction over many years. Franck Bruyère comes with a wealth of experience in the hotel, hospitality and visitor attraction industry and we look forward to the business continuing to move forward under his direction."

Mr Bruyère said: "It's a huge privilege and an honour to be given the opportunity to lead the outstanding award-winning teams on both Britannia and our sister-ship, the luxury floating hotel Fingal, and to follow in the footsteps of Bob Downie who has done so much to improve the quality of customer experiences in Scotland."

Mr Bruyère added: "The ongoing regeneration of the Port of Leith with the recently opened tram link to



**Franck Bruyère**  
Chief Executive

Edinburgh city centre offers a fantastic opportunity for the area to make an even greater contribution to the UK's second most visited city."

Mr Bruyère is originally from France; he has been living in Scotland with his wife and two young sons for over a decade. He enjoys cooking, making a positive impact in the Edinburgh community, and travelling.

At the heart of the Trust's success is an absolute commitment to the quality of the visitor experience.

Supported by outstanding staff, the Trust is committed to providing the highest standards of customer experience to every visitor. Developments have included the audio guide being available in British Sign Language, American Sign Language, Braille script and over 30 languages, making it one of the most translated tours in the world.

This commitment to excellence has led Britannia to the tremendous achievement of being voted Tripadvisor's No.1 UK Attraction twice,

plus winning the title of Best UK Attraction, as voted for by readers of Which Magazine, two years in a row.

Re-launched in 2019, Fingal was developed and is managed by the award-winning team at The Royal Yacht Britannia. Fingal was recently crowned 'AA Hotel of the Year Scotland 2023-24' by the internationally recognised Automobile Association (AA). The AA inspectors singled out Fingal for the top accolade and praised the exceptional quality of the ship's stylish interior design, meticulous attention to detail, unique maritime heritage, outstanding customer service and fine dining experience.

Earlier this year, Fingal also sailed to the top of the world's best hotels list in the Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards 2024. The ship was singled out by reviewers on the world's largest travel guidance platform as one of the highest rated hotels on the planet and 'Best of the Best' in the UK. The five-star 'boatique' hotel was named among best Small and Boutique Hotels in the world by Tripadvisor reviewers, taking first and second place in the UK and Europe lists, respectively.

Fingal is located opposite the new Port of Leith tram stop, which offers a direct and quick transport link between Leith and Edinburgh city centre.

For more information on The Royal Yacht Britannia, visit [royalyachtbritannia.co.uk](https://royalyachtbritannia.co.uk) and follow on social media.

After a rigorous and thorough search, the Board of Trustees are confident that in Franck Bruyère we have found a very worthy successor to Bob Downie.

# Advances on ESG could be undermined by compliance failures within the supply chain, but Scotland is leading the way

Increasingly, ESG performance is enhancing, or eroding, a company's value, reputation and relationship with its clients. Over the next few years, we're likely to see new regulations requiring companies to observe ESG standards across their supply chain - ensuring business partners are meeting ESG standards requires a great deal of preparation as well as investment, resources, and constant monitoring.



**Malcolm Donald**  
Partner, Burges Salmon

In order to assess how UK companies are reporting on the full ESG value chain of their operations, we surveyed over 360 business leaders from across differing sectors and regions to shed light on how prepared businesses are when it comes to meeting their supply chain-related ESG disclosure obligations; obligations set to be further tightened by a raft of new legislation, including the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive.

It is clear from our research that many companies still have some way to go on this aspect of their ESG journey. Progress varies significantly from one business and sector to another; some are sprinting ahead, while others are still finding their feet. Leading the way however is Scotland.

Highlighting Scotland as the UK nation that is most prepared, our report goes on to explain that it is factors such as the size of the Energy sector that is driving this upward trend. Indeed, Scotland's traditional oil and gas sector has demonstrated a commitment to environmental protection, energy

transition and Net Zero strategies. Other large sectors such as financial services are also influenced by the shifting priorities of investors towards ESG and the reputationally advantageous position of putting ESG at the heart of business policies.

Through the conversations we've had with clients based in Scotland, we've noticed that much of the ESG focus has always been on the environment, but there's certainly much more focus on social and governance now and we think that has been driven by internal stakeholders. The other thing that clients are recognising is that it is no longer just about what they do themselves; it is also about making sure that their supply chain is doing the same thing in a demonstrable way.

However, the findings show that organisations in Scotland still have work to do to be certain that they will achieve compliance with ESG legislation and regulations. In fact, our data highlights that businesses in Scotland would benefit from improving their procedures for assessing ESG compliance. Indeed, only a third of those surveyed say their organisation has detailed procedures in place to assess the ESG compliance of prospective supply chain companies.

Efforts could also be made to improve organisations' understanding of the legislative and regulatory ESG risks their supply chain may give rise to, as currently just 31% of respondents in Scotland say their organisation has a full grasp of these. Companies could also boost their chances of achieving ESG compliance by setting up a dedicated team that deals with ESG related matters, including in respect of their supply chains, with fewer than 2 in 5 respondents in Scotland confirming this currently takes place in their organisation.

Leveraging our market leading ESG expertise, at Burges Salmon we have developed a number of practical tools to consolidate all ESG guidance, legislation and other useful resources into interactive and intuitive platforms. Amongst those is our ESG Corporate Disclosure Tool, where clients can seamlessly navigate between the law, ESG disclosure obligations, best practice and training guidance, to help them identify potential risks and unlock opportunities so they can derive real value from it.

[www.burges-salmon.com](http://www.burges-salmon.com)





# 2024 Qualification Results – Delivering For Local Employers

Thousands of young people across Edinburgh received the results of their SQA qualifications this month, and they should be pleased with all their hard work.

The qualifications that have been achieved give learners a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding in a wealth of subject areas, many of which have given them experience of working with a local employer.

While for some learners their results enable them to take the next step in their education journey, for others their results enable them to enter the workplace. This might be to start a job or take an apprenticeship or internship that includes a mix of work and learning.

So, what does this mean for Edinburgh employers? Here we provide some information about the qualifications that you may be seeing in job applications and examples of the benefits of some of these pathways for young people and for employers.

## Work-based learning

Foundation Apprenticeships give learners the opportunity to gain experience of the workplace and achieve a valuable qualification while still being at school, with a number of SQA centres in Edinburgh approved to offer them.

They are a work-based learning opportunity for secondary school pupils usually starting in S5. Young people can spend time out of school with a local employer and complete the Foundation Apprenticeship alongside their more traditional courses.

In the 2023-24 session, around 70 entries have been registered for Foundation Apprenticeship courses in SQA centres in Edinburgh. Young people in S5 and S6 from Dumfries have also been working towards Foundation Apprenticeships. For some this has been in Creative and Digital Media, where they have worked with local employers to build their skills and experience and develop an understanding of the demands of the workplace.

## August's story

Duncan Curtis, Academy Lead at Alive Radio hosted student August Wildner as part of his Foundation Apprenticeship, focusing on audio production. Duncan said: "Providing the placement for the Foundation Apprenticeship has offered a route for young people into our industry. It gives them the opportunity to gain experience of a working radio station and develop technical skills. They get a real sense of the sort of work we do in the studio, and if they love it, it will give them a real sense of direction for where they want to go next."

August said: "My Foundation Apprenticeship was timetabled alongside my other subjects, so it just became a normal part of my school day. The apprenticeship has really



helped me decide on what it is I want to do after school. I'm going on to study Sound Engineering at university."

## Valuable work experience

Sarah McKnight, Principal Teacher of Foundation Apprenticeships at the local council explains: "A Foundation Apprenticeship allows young people to study in class and gain valuable work experience at the same time. Learners get to take their education training out of school and work closely with an employer.

"We've found that lots of people on the Creative and Digital Media course have been given unconditional offers from the colleges and universities that they have applied to because of the practical experiences they have developed. It's really helped them stand out from other applicants."

## Qualifications for everyone

In addition to National, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, SQA offers a wide range of qualifications, in a variety of different sectors.

**National Certificates (NCs) and National Progression Awards (NPAs)** develop skills much sought after by employers, and prepare people for employment, career development or educational progression. NPAs are linked to National Occupational Standards and are delivered in partnership with schools, colleges and employers. There are NCs and NPAs in subject areas as diverse as Computing Science, Employability, Hair and Beauty and Sports Education.

Skills for Work courses focus on generic employability skills needed for the workplace. The courses place emphasis on experiential and practical learning, giving young people an understanding

of the workplace and attitudes towards work. These courses are available in areas including Early Learning and Childcare, Hospitality and Travel and Tourism.

**SQA Awards** are practice-based work qualifications for specific sectors, providing skills and recognition for a diverse range of learners. They're available in areas including British Sign Language, Customer Service, Forestry/Timber Production and Health and Social Care, among many others.

Find out more about Foundation Apprenticeships and SQA qualifications at [www.sqa.org.uk/foundationapprenticeships](http://www.sqa.org.uk/foundationapprenticeships) and [www.sqa.org.uk/mysector](http://www.sqa.org.uk/mysector).

As the Regional Manager for Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian, Theresa McGowan has extensive knowledge of SQA qualifications, from those delivered in schools and colleges, to workplace-based qualifications. If you would like advice on delivering SQA qualifications, please contact Theresa at [theresa.mcgowan@sqa.org.uk](mailto:theresa.mcgowan@sqa.org.uk).



# In Conversation with: Stuart Wallace, Forth Ports

## Stuart Wallace

Chief Executive Officer,  
Forth Ports



### 1. Forth Ports plays a crucial role in the UK's trade and logistics. Can you elaborate on how the ports contribute to the local and national economy, and what plans you have to enhance this impact?

Ports are critical hubs for the import and export of goods and commodities – from aggregates and agricultural products to high quality malt whisky and seed potatoes – and now ports play a key role in the UK and Scotland's roll-out of offshore renewable energy. Around 95 percent of the UK's trade goes through ports with the Port of Grangemouth alone handling 30% of Scottish GDP, with £6 billion worth of goods passing through the port.

Offshore wind is a key development focus for Forth Ports, and for Scotland and the UK, as we seek to deliver our net zero ambitions. Investing in our port infrastructure ahead of market demand

ensures that facilities are in place to support the rapid expansion of offshore wind projects, including floating offshore wind as the technology moves into deeper seas.

### 2. What steps is Forth Ports taking to reduce its environmental footprint and support the transition to greener operations, particularly within the Green Freeport development?

We have set out our commitment and the actions we are taking to achieve a net zero carbon operation. Our vision is to achieve carbon neutral emissions by 2032 and creating an infrastructure platform to help accelerate the UK's path to a decarbonised economy with full net zero carbon emissions being achieved by Forth Ports by 2042. Across all eight of our UK ports, including Leith, Forth Ports is overhauling and electrifying equipment and machinery, switching to low carbon fuels, increasing on-site renewable energy generation and promoting low carbon delivery alternatives such as rail and barge.

Forth Ports is part of the Forth Green Freeport consortium which is seeking to accelerate the drive to net zero across

Scotland with a fifth of the overall FGF target looking at SME growth which Leith in particular is well suited to.

In Scotland we have completed the redevelopment of the Port of Dundee which is the marshalling and pre-assembly hub for the Neart na Gaoithe offshore wind farm and will perform the same function for the Inch Cape offshore wind farm. In Leith, we will shortly complete construction of a new deep water berth specifically designed for the offshore wind industry. The berth is part of what will become Scotland's largest renewables hub in Leith including green manufacturing facilities.

### 3. With Scotland's commitment to renewable energy, how is Forth Ports positioned to support the growth of this sector, and what infrastructure developments are being made to facilitate this?

Ports are perfect locations for low carbon energy projects, from offshore wind farms and hydrogen production to the development of sustainable fuels and carbon capture. One of the biggest areas for green energy port development



# th Ports

opportunity is offshore wind. Offshore wind projects have the potential to generate large amounts of green electricity and reindustrialise many coastal areas. In the past, our ports in Dundee, Leith and Burntisland would have handled fossil fuels for energy but with the shift towards renewable energy and low carbon fuels, we knew there was a significant opportunity to repurpose and upgrade these facilities.

We have started on that journey ahead of the market developing and our private investment programme, totalling £150 million, has already provided crucial support to offshore wind development with the creation of bespoke renewables hubs in Dundee and in Leith. This investment not only facilitates the transition to net zero but also lays the

groundwork for emerging technologies such as floating offshore wind (FLOW) and green hydrogen.

#### **4. Ports are often integral parts of their local communities. How does Forth Ports engage with local stakeholders and communities to ensure their interests are considered and supported?**

The creation of high quality, green jobs will have a lasting positive impact on local communities but our role in the community goes beyond just creating jobs. Our ports have been around for hundreds of years and the local communities have been our neighbours as the ports have changed and developed in response to market demand and changes in technology. We play an active role in the communities with education and heritage projects, port

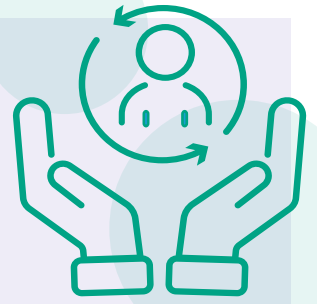
community open days and most recently through the creation of a local community fund in Leith which provides financial support to a variety of local projects focused around mental health.

#### **5. As the new CEO, what is your vision for the future of Forth Ports, and what strategic priorities will you focus on to drive growth and resilience in the coming years?**

I am honoured, privileged and excited about the opportunity to lead Forth Ports as the new CEO. Our ports are geographically well placed and equipped to continue to serve our customers and the UK economy as we trade with the rest of the world; in both existing and new commodities and trade flows. Our people are the future of our business and we invest our time to ensure that Forth Ports people are well trained, have opportunities to develop and grow in their roles and encourage them to be innovative in their approach.

Our vision is to achieve carbon neutral emissions by 2032 and creating an infrastructure platform to help accelerate the UK's path to a decarbonised economy with full net zero carbon emissions being achieved by Forth Ports by 2042.





Access new

# Business Support

Designed to support Scottish businesses grow

We are delighted to announce that we are managing three initiatives aimed at bolstering the growth and scalability of businesses within the Scottish ecosystem.

These projects will provide companies with complimentary support and training to:

- Elevate their ambitions.
- Stimulate innovation.
- Enhance export capacity and competitiveness.
- Reduce carbon emissions through a customised net-zero plan.



In partnership with:

Scottish Enterprise

## Programme 1: AI and Digital Capabilities: A Growth Catalyst for Scottish Businesses

This programme is designed to equip SMEs with a robust understanding of AI and digital technologies, along with the meta-skills required for effective implementation, including best practice in change management. This will support innovation, enhance scalability, and boost productivity within the participating organisations.

## Programme 2: Creating a Strategy for Transformational Growth

This programme aims to support Scottish businesses to navigate the challenges of a hyper-competitive world by supporting transformational growth, helping to build resilience, increasing leadership ambition and risk appetite, and providing strategic support to enable participants to identify and maximise opportunities.

## Programme 3: Supporting the Net Zero Journey

This programme is designed to guide Scottish businesses towards achieving Net Zero emissions, aligning with the Scottish Government's 2045 target. We take participants through a five-stage journey, which includes the creation of a comprehensive Net Zero action plan tailored to each business. It also offers SMEs bespoke guidance on their journey towards Net Zero. This not only facilitates change within your organisation, but can open up new opportunities within your supply chain.

## Keen to Participate?

Our programmes, offered at no cost, are open to Scottish companies with a workforce of 7 or more. Applications are open, and can be made by completing an application form. Companies can apply for all three programmes but will need to complete separate application forms.

Further information on the projects, modules, dates and application forms are available via our website: [www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/business-support-projects](http://www.edinburghchamber.co.uk/business-support-projects).

Please be aware that a pre-screening process is in place to ascertain the suitability of participants. Due to the limited availability of spaces, we cannot guarantee a spot for every applicant. Once approved, we will be in touch with participants to share more details on each programme.

If you have any questions please contact our team on **0131 221 2999** or email [projects@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:projects@edinburghchamber.co.uk).



## Scottish Scale-Ups geared up for growth

As the leading advisor to scale-up businesses in the UK, BDO has recently had the privilege of helping to launch the Scale-Up Britain roadshow, with the Scale-Up Institute, in Glasgow to support Scottish businesses looking to expand and accelerate growth.

A scale-up is a business with a minimum of 10 employees, growing its turnover or headcount by more than 20% every year over a three-year period. By definition, a scale-up is no longer a start-up and most of these companies are delivering significant revenues and creating impressive job numbers, but despite having achieved plenty, they still face challenges as they go for growth.

Scotland was chosen by the Scale-Up Institute as the location for launching this UK-wide event. There's plenty of ambition in Scotland and we meet impressive entrepreneurs all the time, keen to grow their businesses through organic growth, international expansion or buy and build.

Access to capital was cited as a major challenge for business owners in Scotland, according to our most regular survey of mid-market businesses.

More than a quarter (28%) are struggling to secure funding whether through bank loans, private equity, private credit loans or government grants. Yet, there are many

investors with capital to deploy and the ambition to back Scottish businesses to scale.

The key to joining the dots between business owners and the funding available is the ecosystem of advisers, investors, and the entrepreneurs who have already scaled their businesses. A combination of this experience and expertise to connect businesses with the best fit funders will be the difference to our collective future success.

Funding is not the only prerequisite to scaling up, there are other challenges facing business owners such as access to talent, supply chain disruption and an ongoing pressure on costs. Sometimes, the key to unlocking growth is outsourcing accounting and compliance services to support growth and changing requirements in the UK and globally. It's also important for owner-managers scaling their business to have flexibility in managing their costs which should be underpinned by adopting technology and robust management reporting.

We work with businesses to develop

business plans and projections and support their teams to deliver against targets in a sustainable way. This better positions companies looking to attract funding as investors or funders will be keen to see a track record of delivery and plans for how they will continue to do so in the future.

We believe that the Scottish scale-up ecosystem and networks will also be vital to overcoming some of these barriers. The shared experiences, insights and access to international or deep sector experts can provide business owners with a fast-track to a solution. It is our shared ambition and success that will be key to boosting Scotland's wider economic prospects and growing the overall number of scale-ups based here.

The key to joining the dots between business owners and the funding available is the ecosystem of advisers, investors, and the entrepreneurs who have already scaled their businesses.



**Andrew McNamara**  
Partner, BDO

At the heart of Edinburgh and across Scotland, EIB provides strategic work winning advice, research, bid management and bid writing services.



### What We Do

EiB is a strategic work winning consultancy, with a team of over 40 bid consultants. We deliver market-leading bid management and writing support, focused on driving success for our clients. Our bid consultants work collaboratively with our clients at every step of the process, embedding themselves within client teams and providing constructive challenge. This ensures the written content is compelling and aligned to the commissioning client's requirements to win the contract.

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# ESG regulation changes in Scotland

In February 2023, Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) regulations changed significantly in Scotland. There was also the introduction of the New Build Heat Standard (NBHS), which affects new buildings and conversions when building warrants are applied for after 01 April 2024. We explore these and other future regulatory changes to advise you on how best to navigate this uncertain landscape.

## Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) rate buildings on energy efficiency in bands from A (best) to G (worst). The primary metric for non-domestic EPCs is estimated carbon dioxide emissions.

The most significant change in the February 2023 update to EPCs is the carbon factor applied to grid-supplied electricity. The carbon factor assigns carbon dioxide emissions for each kWh of energy that a building uses, depending on fuel type. For electricity, this has been reduced by over 70% to reflect the increasing proportion of low-carbon electricity supplied to the UK grid.

The carbon factor for electricity has been significantly reduced and the range of the bandings has remained the same. As a result, all buildings can expect to receive better ratings than before. This is especially true for buildings with all-electric services, which will typically see a substantial improvement.

Because of this, we've seen a rise in buildings achieving an A rating without necessarily having good energy performance. This presents a risk for clients, especially those unfamiliar with the differences between Scottish and English systems and assume an A rated building must have excellent energy performance. New Scottish EPC methodology is expected in the coming years, but the details of what this will entail are unconfirmed.

We predict that the new system will discriminate more effectively between buildings with varying energy performance. This means that buildings which currently hold an A rating may receive significantly worse ratings if reassessed under new regulations.


## New Build Heat Standard (NBHS)


From 1 April 2024 new buildings in Scotland cannot use direct-emission heating systems (e.g., gas-fired boilers) and must use alternatives (e.g., heat pumps and electric heating). However, this doesn't apply to buildings where the building warrant was applied for prior to 1 April 2024; this change is part of the wider Heat in Building Strategy.

From 2045, the Scottish government proposed that direct-emission heating systems will be banned in all buildings. There's also a planned measure to encourage connections to low-carbon heat networks, and ensures the minimum energy efficiency standards are met. The exact form these regulations will take is currently undetermined.


### Heat in Buildings Strategy

Achieving Net Zero Emissions in Scotland's Buildings





**Calum Mackenzie**  
ESG Consultant



Scottish Government  
Riaghaidh na h-Alba  
gov.scot

## The importance of strategy and planning

Scotland's commitment to decarbonisation has been a catalyst for regulatory changes, but the exact nature of future regulation is yet to be confirmed. So, it's essential to stick to basic, robust principles rather than let the uncertainty around the details of future regulations lead to inaction.

Owners must look ahead and have a strategy in place to improve energy efficiency, end the use of direct emission heating, and make best use of natural trigger points (tenancy breaks or life expired systems). This will minimise costs, allow you to budget effectively and mitigate the risks of future regulation changes.

Implementation of the most feasible solution will require collaboration and understanding of the key stages and breakpoints throughout a building's life cycle.

With our 'One Team' approach, we can guide owners across a range of sectors

on the current efficiency of their buildings and make recommendations. We'll also implement pragmatic and robust steps to meet the new standards.

Our integrated solution incorporates our in-house building surveying, project management, MEP and cost management expertise throughout, ensuring our decarbonisation reports and recommendations are technically reviewed and financially viable to fully support the ongoing planning, strategy and delivery of any upgrades and retrofitting works needed.

Want to learn more about ESG, EPCs and the regulation changes in Scotland? Get in touch with expert ESG Consultant Calum Mackenzie, who can help you with your ESG goals and compliance.

**t: +44 758 448 1876**

**e: [calum.mackenzie@hollisglobal.com](mailto:calum.mackenzie@hollisglobal.com)**

# HOLLIS

# WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS



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**Welcome**  
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## JOIN THE CHAMBER TODAY

**Would you like more information on joining the Chamber?**

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**Richard Ellis**, Head of Membership, [richard.ellis@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:richard.ellis@edinburghchamber.co.uk)



# Safeguarding health with asbestos removal

As concerns over the dangers of asbestos persist, it's critical to address ongoing risks. Kim Leslie, leading asbestos-related disease lawyer at Irwin Mitchell, highlights the urgent need for more comprehensive removal efforts in Edinburgh's public buildings to safeguard public health.

The legal firm - which has offices in 18 locations throughout Scotland, England and Wales after their recent strategic investment in Wright, Johnston & Mackenzie LLP - conducted an in-depth analysis of asbestos removal efforts in public buildings in Edinburgh. This examination revealed a concerning trend in the handling of the hazardous material. Despite previous calls for a comprehensive strategy, just 11 public buildings managed by Edinburgh City Council saw asbestos removal in the past year, a stark contrast to the broader need for eradication.

Irwin Mitchell had already released a detailed report based on data from 20 UK councils, highlighting the prevalence of asbestos in public buildings. This information, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act for the years 2017/18 to 2021/22, underscored the ongoing risk, which the government had addressed by rejecting a proposed 40-year deadline for complete removal. In Edinburgh alone, 235 local authority buildings were identified as containing asbestos.

Kim Leslie, who leads the complex personal injury team at Irwin Mitchell in Scotland, emphasised the urgency of the situation: "Our findings last year brought to light the widespread danger asbestos represents not only to industrial workers, but also to the public and employees who use these buildings daily.

"Through our work, we're sadly all too familiar with the devastating impact that asbestos can have on people's health. The eradication of this dangerous substance from public buildings should be at the forefront of the council's plans. Schools have a particularly high rate, and that should really be pushing us as a community to address the lingering concerns."

The data obtained by Irwin Mitchell also reveals that the cost of removing asbestos from the 11 aforementioned public buildings in Edinburgh totalled around £13,000.

For more information on Irwin Mitchell's efforts and their ongoing campaign for safer public spaces visit [www.irwinmitchell.com](http://www.irwinmitchell.com).



Kim Leslie



**bad  
dino**  
app design + development

## 60 Seconds

**Name:** Xabier Villares

**Company Name:** The Melting Pot

**Website:** [themeltingpotedinburgh.org.uk](http://themeltingpotedinburgh.org.uk)

**Q: In five words or less, what do you do?**

A: Foster social innovation across Scotland.

**Q: How long have you been in your current role?**

A: For 3 years.

**Q: What does a week in your job look like?**

A: An unpredictable, magnificent journey, focused on supporting our members to create structural, meaningful change.

**Q: Your proudest moment with your organisation, or biggest 'win'?**

A: The collective effort to bring to life our Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

**Q: Your favourite top tip or quote in business?**

A: Whatever you do, take care of your community. Always.

**Q: How long have you been a member of the Chamber for and why did you join?**

A: Nearly one year. We joined because it's a central institution to this city's life!

**Q: Where do you read your copy of Business Comment?**

A: Usually at work, on a quiet Friday.



Xabier Villares

# GET WITH IT

By Bill Magee

Scottish Business Technology  
Writer of the Year

Edinburgh is plumb centre of the digital action as a Scottish economy beginning to feel the benefits of a buoyant technology sector as it increases its commercial growth and headcount this year.



Digital tech is Scotland's fastest-growing sector for inward investment with centres-of-excellence collaborating to grow at one-and-a-times greater than any other industry.

Expertise includes cyber security, data, fintech, games, global business services, software and IT, space, and waste and wastewater technology.

Also optimising 5G hub technology attracting investment totalling a potential estimated £17 billion contribution to Scotland GDP by 2035.

ScotlandIS chief executive Karen Meechan says despite one of the toughest economic periods in a generation, an overwhelming majority of respondents to its annual Technology Industry Survey remain highly positive.

Ninety eight per cent are maintaining or increasing their headcount and 90 per cent increasing sales whilst seventy eight per cent expressed optimism going forwards.

Edinburgh is leading the charge to equip employees with razor-sharp skills. Pew Research highlights a key as what's become known as a Digital Readiness Tool (DRT).

Capital-based Exception's Managing Director Alasdair Hendry explains organisations need support throughout their journey with valuable experience, advice and expert delivery.

The Exception Digital Readiness Tool goes that extra mile by asking questions to help you validate and better understand your real state of digital readiness. It

complements the government's central digital and data office (CDDO).

Self-assessment questions immediately make clear your readiness score, followed up by a 30-minute free consultation with a public sector principal consultant receiving a bespoke report providing practical advice to achieve, improve, accelerate digital readiness.

Exception also alerts the marketplace to the EU Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA) coming into force January 17<sup>th</sup> 2025.

Financial services organisations need to prepare now, as they're required to comply. The CIO will lead the safeguarding of an entire financial ecosystem by ensuring it is equipped with enhanced service resilience and cybersecurity.



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# Business Comment

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**0191 5805467**

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**[liz.hughes@distinctivegroup.co.uk](mailto:liz.hughes@distinctivegroup.co.uk)**

Photo Credit: Sam Sills

# The University of Edinburgh: Maximising Impact



Teaching and research are at the heart of what universities do. But the reason behind this activity is to create impact, by which we mean make the world better in some way.

At the University of Edinburgh, we do this by working with others in the public, private and third sectors, through industrial partnerships and consultancy; by forming companies; and by licensing our intellectual property to those who can scale it up and use it.

One example would be drug candidate NXP900 for hard-to-treat cancers - discovered by Professors Neil Carragher

and Asier Unciti-Broceta at the University's Institute of Genetics and Cancer, developed over ten years and licensed to drug company Nuvectis. It's now in clinical trials.

The University's commercialisation service, Edinburgh Innovations, exists to support staff and students to translate their ideas and research into solutions that improve lives. In the recent Times Higher Education rankings, Edinburgh was rated joint first

in the world for - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure. SDG9 focuses on the need to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation globally.

The University scored 100 out of 100 for its contribution to this SDG, including its research, patents, research income from industry and number of University spinouts.

The University scored 100 out of 100 for its contribution to this SDG, including its research, patents, research income from industry and number of University spinouts... and industrial and translational research projects brought in £91.9m of funding - a quarter of the University's research income.



Last year, 123 student and staff startups and spinouts were founded, and industrial and translational research projects brought in £91.9m of funding – a quarter of the University’s research income.

Unlocking innovation from research-intensive universities such as Edinburgh is vital to economic development both internationally and regionally.

An independent report commissioned last year found that the University of Edinburgh generates £7.52 billion per year for the UK economy.

The study, led by policy and economics consultancy London Economics, found that every £1 spent by the University produced £6.90 in economic benefit across the UK, a 34 per cent increase in impact since 2015-16.

The University - Scotland’s largest - also supports more than 32,760 jobs.

From understanding volcanic eruptions to investigating the influence of our genes on disease, 9,200 academics generate £3.2 billion annually from their research and knowledge exchange activities.

That our innovation contributes to the UK economy is fantastic, but of course the real impact is in our critical mission areas for society: improving future health care, harnessing data and AI for good and tackling the climate and environment crisis.

Entrepreneurship also makes a vital contribution, with the University’s startup and spinout companies generating £162 million a year. Collaborations like energy storage company Sunamp (currently up against Google Deep Mind and the AstraZeneca/ Oxford partnership for the MacRobert innovation prize) and automated recycling startup, Danu Robotics, begin with a brilliant idea, and it’s our rewarding role to help those ideas out of the University and into the world, where they can make a difference.

Looking ahead, our ambition lies in large, global, interdisciplinary partnerships between academia and the public and private sectors to co-create innovation at a scale that can tackle the world’s biggest challenges.

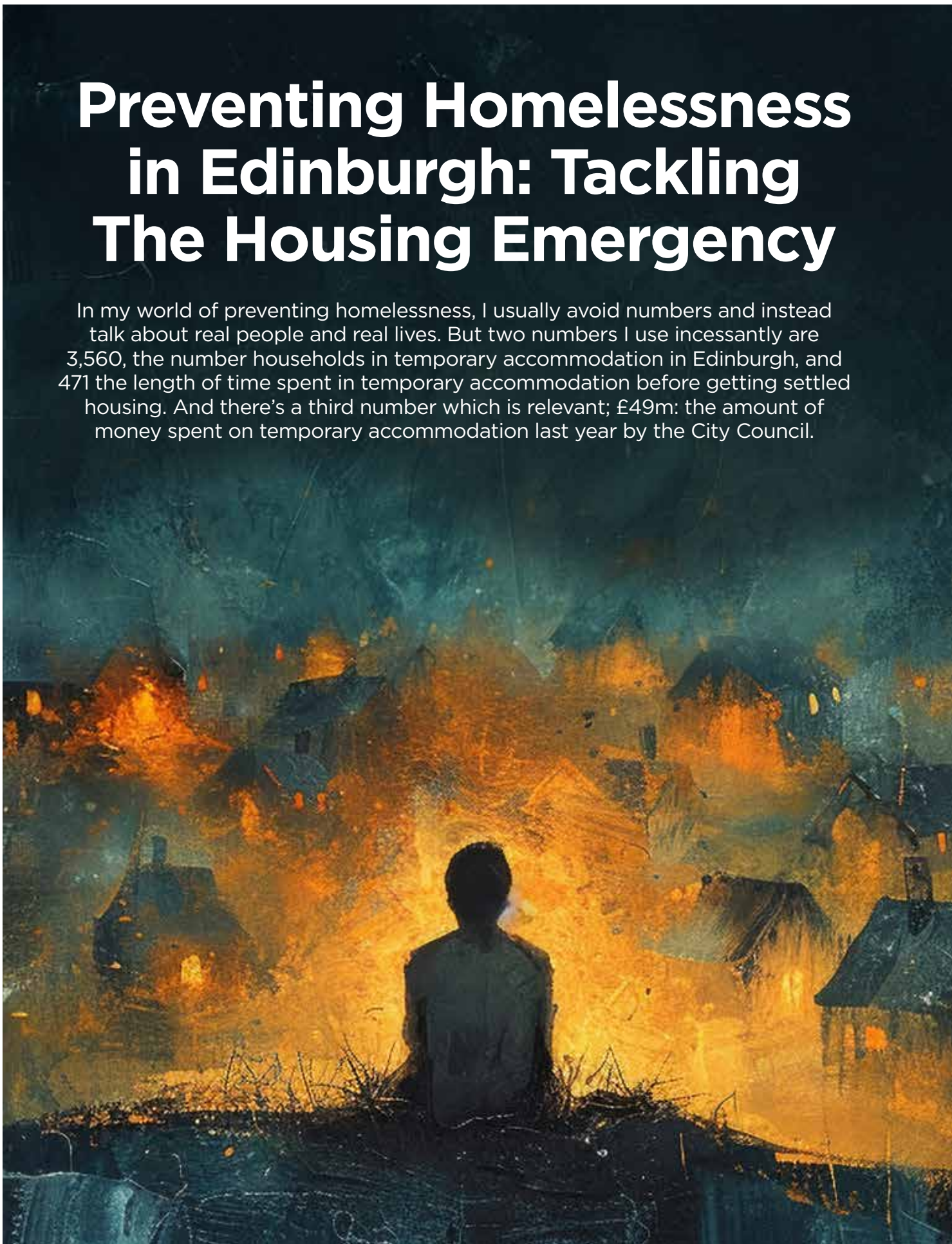
[www.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ed.ac.uk)



**Dr Andrea Taylor** CEO,  
Edinburgh Innovations

# Preventing Homelessness in Edinburgh: Tackling The Housing Emergency

In my world of preventing homelessness, I usually avoid numbers and instead talk about real people and real lives. But two numbers I use incessantly are 3,560, the number households in temporary accommodation in Edinburgh, and 471 the length of time spent in temporary accommodation before getting settled housing. And there's a third number which is relevant; £49m: the amount of money spent on temporary accommodation last year by the City Council.



The longer people stay in temporary accommodation, the bigger the impact it has on their health and wellbeing. There is really strong evidence that the instability of being homeless and in temporary accommodation significantly increases the chances of someone falling seriously ill and having to be admitted to hospital.

The longer children spend homeless and in temporary accommodation, the less well they will do at school. And the ability of someone who is homeless and in temporary accommodation to stay in employment is greatly reduced.

All of this means homelessness is not just a problem for those who experience it but for the cities and communities in which they live. If they cannot flourish in education, in work or in as a member of their community, we all lose the benefit of their contribution to all our lives. They epitomise the truth that when our neighbour struggles, we all suffer.

The housing emergency is not a bricks and mortar problem, it's a human tragedy, whose impact extends beyond those who tip into homelessness. Fundamental to a healthy, thriving economy is the right housing at the right price in the right place so people can be part of their community and access their work.

It's why the recently refreshed National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) now has housing at its heart. I am a member of the NSET Delivery Board, and I and other members have been arguing for this since its inception.

The Housing emergency did not happen overnight. Its roots go as far back as "right to buy" but the real momentum began with the crash of 2008 and in particular the role land values play in the cost of building. The long-term solution requires far more state supported building of new housing stock so we have the housing people need, in the places they want

to live, close to the jobs they want to do. It is the best way of treating our neighbour and the stranger as we would want to be treated whilst building the inclusive economy we want for all of us.



**Ewan Atiken**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Cyrenians





# Chamber Training Calendar

August, September, October, November

**August**

**Wednesday 7th**  
Finance for Non-Financial Managers

**Tuesday 27th**  
Innovation: Generating New Revenue Streams from Current Capabilities

**Thursday 29th**  
Essential Management Skills

**September**

**Tuesday 10th**  
Understanding Export and Export Documentation

**Wednesday 11th**  
Mastering the Art of Project Management: Strategies for Seamless Success

**Thursday 12th**  
Viral Content & Trending Topics

**Wednesday 25th**  
Social Ads Mastery Course: Propel Your Business Growth with Effective Online Marketing

**October**

**Thursday 10th**  
Customs Procedures, Documentation & Rules of Origin

**November**

**Tuesday 5th**  
Becoming a Successful Leader

**Wednesday 13th**  
Essential Management Skills

Visit our website to find out more and book your place.

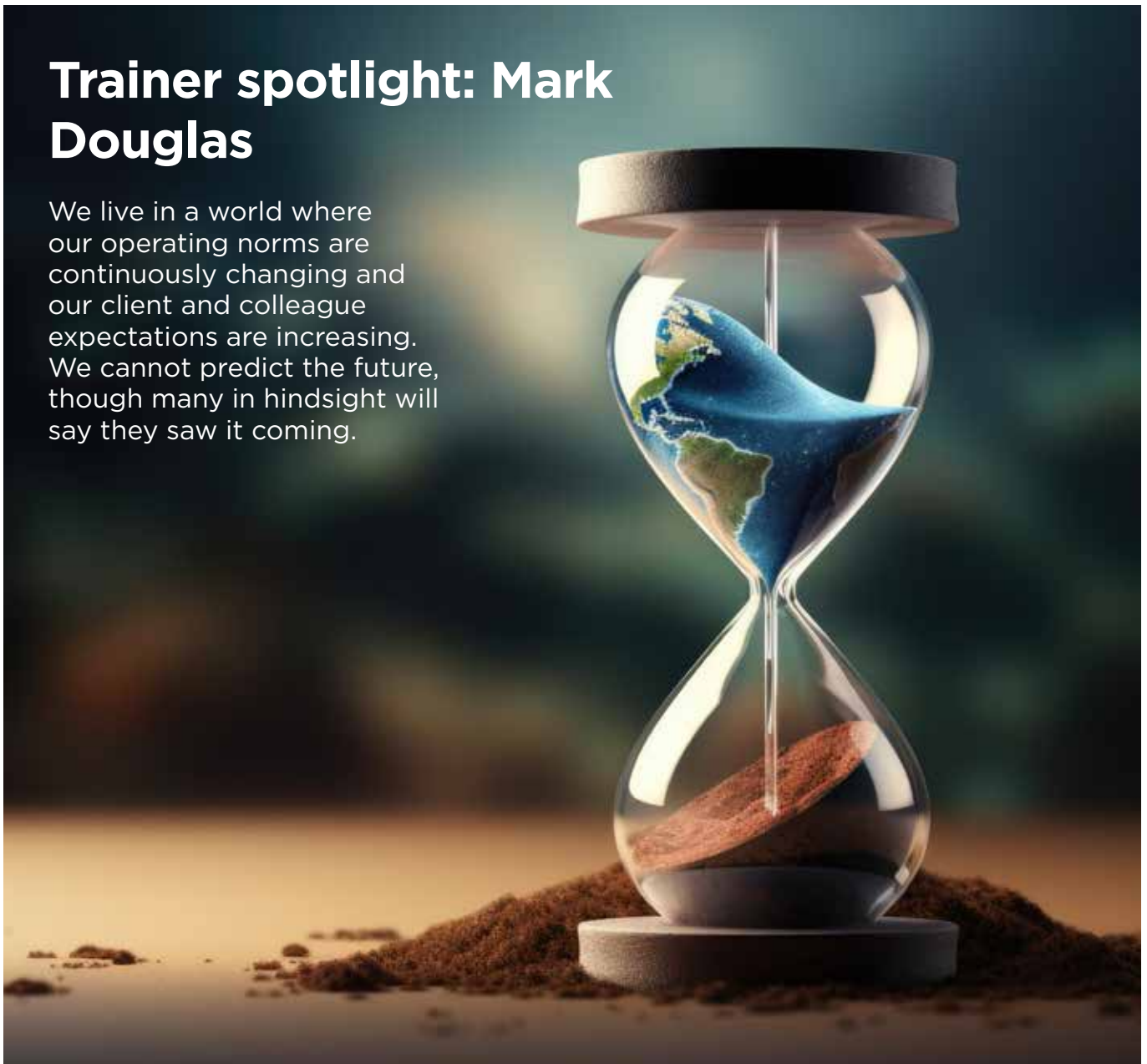
[edinburghchamber.co.uk/training-events](https://edinburghchamber.co.uk/training-events)





## Trainer spotlight: Mark Douglas

We live in a world where our operating norms are continuously changing and our client and colleague expectations are increasing. We cannot predict the future, though many in hindsight will say they saw it coming.



Our leadership skills and personal resilience are crucial and most helpful when navigating times of great ambiguity, uncertainty and challenge, all of which seem to be more and more prevalent in our day-to-day working lives.

More than ever, staying focused on your priorities and the future you want to create is key. The future is not yet written and it is up to us to start writing it. What will be the next chapter in your journey? What direction are you going in? What really matters to you? We need to 'slow the world down' and make the best decisions we can, at the time, with the information we have. If we do this, we will 'speed the world up' as we will be less likely have to revisit these decisions in the future.

Continuing to build our team's resilience is key. We all have moments of self-doubt and wonder if we can really achieve what is being asked of us. The world can be a tough and lonely place, where

perceived rejection and failure is tough to handle. Sometimes, the 'stories we tell ourselves' can hold us back; we can end up questioning our ability and our worth. Our ability to continue on and keep self-belief is a key attribute to achieving both work and personal success.

From the human world, to the animal worlds, there are some lessons we can learn from the Ptarmigan. The Ptarmigan is a mountain bird that lives in the high mountains of Scotland, North America and the Far East. It does not migrate but adapts to the seasons; it is seasonally camouflaged as its feathers change from grey/brown/black in the summer to white in the winter. It has learnt that by adapting to its operating environment it can thrive despite global warming, wind farms and other environmental impacts. And therein lies the ethos that we all need to learn from - embrace our new operating contexts whatever these might

be, while remembering the future is not yet written. Or in other words, stop wishing for the weather to improve, adapt (buy a weatherproof jacket!) and you too can thrive whatever the forecast.



# A summer packed full of events in Edinburgh

While it feels like we have been deprived of much summer sun, the same cannot be said about Chamber events as we have brought our members a packed social calendar over the summer months.



With the Fringe and Edinburgh International Festival turning our City into a bustling creative hub it was only fair to showcase a piece of this puzzle with a Business Update from Jason Barrett, Chief Executive of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Our members joined us in the newly refurbished hub of the Tattoo on Cockburn Street to hear from Jason on all the work that goes into the Tattoo, this year's theme, and the economic and social benefits the staple event brings to the city.

Our members also received an inside look into another Edinburgh event staple in June, The Royal Highland Show, before the showgrounds opened to the public. Renowned for its tradition, having started in 1822, the 4-day event brings together 800 trade exhibitors, and 2,500 livestock competitors entering into 900+ competitions, with over 5,000 animals and hundreds of thousands of visitors to experience a plethora of entertainment, food and farming.

Our social summer calendar didn't stop there, with several companies joining us to battle it out over our renowned Chamber Scavenger Hunt. Taking place in the city centre, teams scavenged from the West End to East End decoding co-ordinates and picture-based clues. A massive well done to St James Quarter for taking our Scavenger Hunt crown, and a big thank you to our event partners for their generous prizes.

Alongside our social calendar, we have continued to bring our members a selection of events to keep them informed on changes occurring in our city and beyond. The most recent iteration of our 'Developing Edinburgh' series brought key city stakeholders together to discuss the developments going on within our city centre. It brought together Paul Lawrence, Chief Executive of the City of Edinburgh Council, Roddy Smith, Chief Executive of Essential Edinburgh and Anne Ledgerwood, Estate Director of St James Quarter to

discuss the future planning strategies and investments required in our city centre to ensure it continues to thrive and meet the needs of tourists and locals alike.

For insights beyond the locale, James Sproule, UK Chief Economist at Handelsbanken joined us for an economic update, sharing insights on the UK economy and the outlook ahead. Lastly, Sarah Boyd, Managing Director of Lothian Buses joined us for our bi-monthly Inspiring Women in Business Lunch where she shared her personal and business journey, exploring the good and bad, and lessons learned. With a mixed calendar of social events and insightful discussions we have continued to showcase some of Edinburgh's best venues, visiting Duck and Waffle, Maki & Ramen and Black Ivy. Keep an eye out for our next few events with Networking Lunches at Fazenda, Speed Networking at Apex Hotels and many more!

Alongside our social calendar, we have continued to bring our members a selection of events to keep them informed on changes occurring in our city and beyond.

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With over 20 years of craftsmanship, Woodbox is your trusted partner for creating bespoke furniture. Our passion lies in delivering a high-quality service tailored to your specific needs and style.

We believe in the power of honesty and strong relationships. From consultation to installation, we work closely with you to ensure your vision is realised. Our collaborative process guarantees each piece we create fits your space and lifestyle.

Combining modern and traditional techniques, we craft furniture that is both timeless and contemporary. We meticulously select the finest materials from local and sustainable sources, ensuring that every piece looks exceptional and stands the test of time.

Our commitment to excellence and attention to detail ensures each item reflects our clients' tastes and requirements. Whether you need a statement piece for your home or bespoke solutions for your commercial space, Woodbox transforms your ideas into reality.

Join our many satisfied clients and explore



*Maciej Szczypel*

our portfolio to discover the quality that sets Woodbox apart. To learn more about our services or start a project, please get in touch. Your vision is our mission, and we look forward to building something

beautiful together.

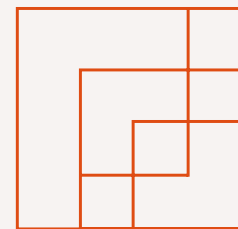
What our customers say:

"Woodbox has made beautiful joinery pieces for our homes and commercial projects. We've been working with them for many years and they have always been very professional, efficient, and knowledgeable. Every project they have done for us is beyond expectation! We cannot recommend Woodbox enough for anyone looking for a good joiner!" - Zan

"Woodbox did an amazing job building my wardrobes. They worked with me closely from the beginning to come up with a unique design. They presented a number of different options as to how we could achieve what I wanted and brought suggestions for materials I wouldn't have thought of. I would definitely work with them again and would highly recommend Woodbox to anyone I know." - James

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## Securing the future: succession planning for small businesses

In a post-pandemic world, the resilience of small businesses is being tested like never before. The exceptional challenges brought about by Covid-19 have highlighted the importance of having clear plans in place for the continuity and succession of businesses, regardless of size and structure.

It's never nice to think about the possibility of premature death or long-term incapacity, but anticipating the unexpected has become more vital than ever for business owners. Without the right planning, unforeseen circumstances can disrupt the trajectory of a business, sometimes with distressing consequences.

Fortunately, there are simple and cost-effective ways to ensure the future of your business is in safe hands if the worst does happen.

A good starting point is to set aside some dedicated time to consider what you would like to happen to your business, if you were no longer able to lead it. Being well prepared not only protects the interests of the business, but also alleviates the burden on family members and successors during times of crisis.

The next step is to formalise your wishes legally. This can reduce potential risks to your business and ensure a smoother transition, regardless of circumstances.

For sole traders, this could come in the form of making a will, in which you should clearly state who you would like to take over your business. Alarmingly, around 60% of people in Scotland have not got round to making a will. That's understandable, as nobody wants to think about the subject of death – but if you own a business, you should make it a priority.

In Scotland, the legal landscape surrounding succession planning adds another layer of complexity to the equation. The spouse and children of a deceased person hold automatic claims to their 'moveable assets', a term which refers to everything in their estate apart from land and buildings. This could include business assets. Failure to address these legal intricacies can result in unintended consequences.

For incorporated or limited companies, the governance documents of the business also need to be considered. You'll need to ensure that there are no clauses in your Articles of Association or partnership agreement that would prevent the business from passing to the person or people of your choice. It's not unusual for clauses to exist that hinder the transfer of certain aspects of a business to a designated successor listed in a legal will – so careful alignment is required.

Beyond legal considerations, openness and honesty are essential for effective succession planning. Business owners should always talk frankly with their potential successors, to confirm they are aware of their plans and that they agree to take on the business if necessary. After all, nobody wants to leave their company to someone who would rather not have that responsibility.

Furthermore, in cases where successors are young children, appointing interim caretakers or guardians is essential until the children are old enough and mature enough to take over.

Once succession plans are in place, business owners should reevaluate them at least every five years, and following any significant life events such as births, deaths, marriages, or mergers.

I also recommend that a business considers its future over the next five, ten and twenty years, putting plans in place for all possible outcomes across these timescales. By adopting this approach, future challenges can be anticipated and plans can be adapted, ensuring long-term viability and resilience.

Seeking professional guidance from a legal advisor can address any uncertainties and provide peace of mind. People are often

put off consulting a solicitor because they worry about cost, but initial consultations are often free of charge and provide insights into risk management and legal requirements. Even if you already have a succession strategy in place, but are unsure if it is sufficient, it's a good idea to consult a legal specialist.

And if your total estate – including the value of your business – is likely to be over the inheritance tax threshold, which has been frozen at £325,000 since 2009, it's also worth taking expert advice on the more complex aspects of the law surrounding tax. This will allow you to pass more of your hard-earned assets on to your chosen successors, rather than the taxman.

By formalising your wishes and seeking professional guidance to understand all the legal complexities, you can ensure a smoother transition for your business if the unexpected happens, reducing the risk of legal complications whilst also protecting the interests of your loved ones.



**Lisa Flaherty**  
Senior Solicitor,  
Anderson Strathern

# Openreach Calls for Better Broadband Access to Boost Scotland's Full Fibre Network

Openreach is calling for legislative change in Scotland to support the roll out of full fibre broadband.

The company has built its ultrafast network to more than 1.2 million homes and businesses in the country so far, from remote islands to bustling city centres.

Scotland's breath-taking but testing landscape, including a combination of late-medieval, Georgian, Victorian and modern buildings, have thrown up challenges for engineers to overcome.

But there are a number of obstacles that legislative change could help tackle.

In Scotland, owners typically purchase a property under a freehold agreement, meaning they own access rights into the building, along with every other property owner in the building.

However, this means it's more difficult to deliver better broadband to tenements and apartment blocks because of the requirement to obtain consent from every single property owner in the block, as they equally share access rights to communal spaces.

This has led to avoidable delays to build work in many Scottish cities and towns.

Robert Thorburn, Openreach's Partnership Director for Scotland, explained: "In nearly all cases where we're not able to access buildings, it's not because people don't want our new network, it's because of absent landlords. Tenants want the upgrades, but we're unable to carry out the work without their landlord's permission.



"However, research shows that more than 65 per cent of landlords want governments to give greater enforcement powers to network providers to upgrade broadband connections in flats and apartments without their co-operation. Tenants want the upgrades, and landlords don't want the hassle, so that's why we're calling for a change in legislation so we only require a majority of property owners permission, to help avoid the burden of absent landlords."

There are other challenges as well. Two-thirds of broadband poles in Scotland are on private land, compared to around 11 per cent across the UK. This dramatically impacts the pace at which Openreach is able to build - and increases the cost to do so.

There's also currently no concrete requirement for new homes in Scotland to have the necessary ducting to allow for broadband upgrades, meaning around

six per cent of new homes are unable to access better broadband now, or in the future, without significant alterations.

However, following consultation with Openreach and other interested parties, the Scottish Government is set to introduce legislation ensuring that new homes in Scotland can feel the benefit of ultrafast broadband, by mandating full fibre in all new builds. Openreach is calling on MSPs to pass this important piece of legislation in the coming parliamentary session.

Mr Thorburn added: "We're delighted to work with the Scottish Government and see this piece of legislation move forward. We're determined to work collaboratively with both the Scottish and UK governments to overcome challenges.

"Scotland continues to punch above its weight in sectors such as energy, life sciences, tech, and digital elements of the creative industries. But growth in these sectors is underpinned by reliable broadband connections; which facilitate collaboration, new ways of working and open doors to exciting opportunities for businesses and residents.

"We're committed to supporting Scotland to access the economic and social opportunities which better broadband can deliver."

## SP Energy Networks Appoints New CEO

SP Energy Networks has made a new senior appointment with Nicola Connelly taking over as Chief Executive for the organisation.

Nicola is an established leader within the business and takes over from Vicky Kelsall who is retiring after 30 years working across the ScottishPower and Iberdrola Group, including with its North American businesses PacifiCorp and Avangrid before being appointed CEO of SP Energy Networks in 2022.

Nicola is widely recognised across the Group for her outstanding service and excellent leadership qualities, holding various senior roles since joining in 1995. She was previously Finance Director of SP Energy Networks and was appointed Control & Administration Director of ScottishPower in July 2021.

Keith Anderson, CEO of ScottishPower said: "Nicola is a highly experienced and dedicated leader and the appointment reflects her proven track record of strategic vision, strong leadership and consistent delivery.

"With a £12billion investment plan and a huge pipeline of projects across our business to be delivered, her commitment to excellence and driving value will be invaluable to ScottishPower and SP Energy Networks.

"I'd like to thank Vicky for her accomplishments, dedication and commitment to the company, and it is with great respect that I wish her a happy and well-deserved retirement."



**Nicola Connelly**  
Chief Executive

## Edinburgh College begins Going Global programme with Ghanaian university

Edinburgh College recently began an exciting partnership with Sunyani Technical University in Ghana as a part of the British Council's Going Global Programme.



Through this new partnership, Head of School Carole Paterson and Team Leader Iris Aitchison, travelled to Ghana to carry out an initial scoping exercise, during which they met with the university's staff and students as well as employers.

The focus of this partnership is centred around capacity building for entrepreneurialism at an institutional level, giving staff and students the tools, skills and confidence to pursue start-up and self-employment opportunities that are globally impactful and relevant to the development of their communities.

The collaboration aims to enhance the capabilities of staff at the university to design and deliver entrepreneurial-focused learning over the course of a year through innovative online programmes designed by Edinburgh College lecturers.

This aligns to the aims of Going Global which are about working together internationally to ensure that higher education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) meets the needs of our societies, economies and students. This programme demonstrates the impact Edinburgh College has

internationally and highlights the College's continued commitment towards transformational change.

Iris Aitchison, Commercial Contracts Team Leader, said: "We could not have wished for better interactions or opportunities to explore. There is a genuine desire on their part to work with us on this project, and of course, there is on our side too. The key outcome of this visit is that we have formed strong relationships with our Ghanaian counterparts, which we would have been unable to do from a distance."

Juanita Ahia Quarcoo, CBT Coordinator for Sunyani Technical University (STU) said: "I must say the team at STU were also very delighted for the visit. The interactions with staff, students and employer partners gave us a lot of insights that could guide our further engagements. There's a lot of excitement about the programme on the side of STU and we look forward to our visit to consolidate these shared experiences."

The focus of this partnership is centred around capacity building for entrepreneurialism at an institutional level, giving staff and students the tools, skills and confidence to pursue start-up and self-employment opportunities.

# How adaptability will pave the way for Scottish construction post-election

With the General Election now concluded and a mixed outlook for the construction industry, Turner & Townsend's Summer 2024 UK Market Intelligence report highlights the critical need for adaptability amongst future political and economic cycles.

James Darrie, Strategic Lead for Scotland region at Turner & Townsend, stresses that businesses must prioritise flexible approaches to successfully navigate the evolving landscape, particularly in Scotland, where unique regional challenges and opportunities demand tailored strategies and adaptive measures to ensure value from investment.

## The current landscape

Turner & Townsend's Summer Market Intelligence report indicates a decrease in tender price inflation, providing a more stable financial environment for real estate projects. The forecast suggests a 3.0 per cent tender price inflation in 2024, down from previous highs. Despite a 0.9 per cent drop in Q1 2024 construction output due to adverse weather conditions, new orders surged by 15.9 per cent, buoyed by a slowly strengthening domestic economy. So far, so good. This news is a definite cause for cautious optimism and presents positive possibilities for meeting Scotland's unique challenges.

Scotland's potential investors, must be well prepared to execute decisions to remain agile against moving political, financial, and strategic investment landscapes. As James says: "Scotland's construction sector must capitalise on these improving economic conditions while preparing for potential political and economic shifts, where the potential for future changing policies may impact construction cost certainty." The anticipated cut in interest rates is expected to boost confidence further and stimulate activity, providing a robust foundation for growth in 2025 and beyond.

James takes a look at some of the other critical considerations at play:

### Social mobility

The Scottish Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) focuses on enhancing regional transport, a crucial element for improving social mobility. However, substantial investment is needed to deliver on these promises. Although this is a devolved matter, and thus the direct impact of the General Election is limited here, James still stresses the importance of government support to ensure these projects move forward, fostering greater connectivity and access across Scotland.

### A cure for healthcare

Budgetary pressures have caused delays or pauses in at least a dozen NHS construction projects across Scotland



**James Darrie**  
Strategic Lead, Turner & Townsend

over the past two years. Competing demands within the healthcare sector need to be addressed now at government level, whether within primary care or social care settings. The ongoing financial constraints underscore the need for immediate strategic investment to meet growing demands.

### Energy and decarbonisation

Scotland has significant opportunities around decarbonisation and the grid. The ports sector, in particular, serves as a critical enabler for offshore renewable investment. However, as James highlights, a coordinated approach across Government, Private Sector and Infrastructure Investment is needed to maximise these opportunities, leveraging Scotland's natural resources and infrastructure to lead the way in clean energy development.

### Net Zero - A question of balance

To meet Net Zero targets, public sector spending needs to be more aligned between budgets and outputs. Investment in Scotland's defence sector, driven by policy decisions, is creating infrastructure and accommodation for future sustainable growth. This sector has demonstrated commendable foresight and strategic planning, setting a benchmark for sustainable development. Other industries would do well to take a leaf out of their book, and adopt similar best practices. The challenge lies in balancing retrofit projects with public realm improvements, ensuring investments remain sustainable and resilient.

### Home truths - A market in crisis

The Scottish housing market is in crisis, with the Scottish Borders Council and City of Edinburgh Council declaring

housing emergencies. Government policies, such as rental caps, hampered private sector investment in residential projects, making it difficult for Build-to-Rent schemes to gain traction. Encouraging private investment in the residential market requires a supportive policy environment to address these challenges effectively and immediately.

In conclusion, James says: "In Scotland, the focus right now should be on resilient planning with intelligent delivery models, strong governance and adopting digital-first strategies to enhance project delivery and efficiency." He underscores the importance of adaptability and flexibility in enduring multiple political and economic cycles, to securely deliver investment to Scotland, despite the uncertainty of future landscapes.

Now that the election decision has been announced with Labour winning, the construction sector is looking to policymakers for clarity, particularly on the direction of travel for various key sectors, including energy, rail, education, and healthcare. Policymakers need to provide this clarity to enable informed investment decisions for the longer-term future of Scotland.

The improvement in the macro-economic position is absolutely a positive sign. However, the sector must remain vigilant in managing supply chain volatility and high capital deployment costs.

James concludes, "We are most definitely seeing positive investment into Scotland, but we need to be proactive to continue securing reinvestment in existing projects and attracting new investments across infrastructure, real estate, and natural resources. A collaborative approach is needed post-election, to build the future of Scotland."



## Five reasons to be optimistic

There are far too many reasons to list why Edinburgh's future is looking bright for business. Here are my top five reasons to remain optimistic.

### 1. Recent development-driven growth

Edinburgh is ever changing but the last decade is notable for rapid transformation. And we're beginning to reap the rewards.

Since 2014, the tram line has become a firm and successful addition to our transport network which it's hard to imagine we lived without. The old Meadowbank Stadium has made way for the state-of-the-art sustainable facility we have today. The East End of Princes Street's once aging and tired St James Centre has been replaced by the sparkling St James Quarter, visited by over 18 million people annually, and recently the Port of Leith Distillery heralded the start of a new chapter for Ocean Terminal.

Iconic historic buildings which we once worried were at risk have been reimaged by developers. On Princes Street, Johnnie Walker has completely transformed the former House of Fraser store, while Uniqlo has breathed new life into the old BHS. Similarly, work is underway to revitalise Edinburgh's much-loved Jenners building, complementing the transformation of St Andrew Square as a whole. This type of restoration has taken place all over the city, with the redevelopment of the Old Town's India Buildings into the Virgin Hotel another great success story.

Change can be controversial but when designed right, such development can completely reinvigorate Edinburgh's city centre streets and buildings, acting as

a magnet for footfall and neighbouring investment. In part thanks to developers' attraction to Edinburgh, only a handful of our thousands of listed buildings are now on the 'At Risk' Register, proving regeneration and conservation can work hand in hand.

### 2. New opportunities being unlocked

Market conditions have brought major challenges for developers and for our city, not least as Edinburgh sits at the heart of Scotland's national housing emergency, yet spades continue to break the ground. There may be less cranes decorating the skyline than we've become accustomed to, but investors are continuing to choose Edinburgh, including hotel brand Zedwell which recently shared their luxury hotel ambitions for the former Debenhams on Princes Street.

In the next decade, our eyes will cast to the west where plans for a sustainable new 'town', equivalent in size to Linlithgow, will start to take shape. We will see the sustainable transformation of the £1.3 billion Granton Waterfront into a brand-new coastal community, while George Street will become a 'European Boulevard' as we pedestrianise areas, making the street more accessible and enjoyable to visit. The Forth Green Freeport initiative will catalyse major investment in the Port of Leith, fostering its emergence as a global hub for the offshore wind industry and continuing to support the creative sector already well-established there. Around 11,000 direct jobs are expected to be created as a result, and we expect

around 4,000 of those to be here in Edinburgh, which is major.

The way we enjoy Edinburgh is set to change too. The refurbished King's Theatre will open its doors, we'll be able to enjoy international acts at a brand new 8,500-capacity arena at Edinburgh Park, while ambitions for cultural venues like the Leith Theatre and leisure attractions like Lost Shore Surf Resort will be realised.

There are many hurdles to get over, but there is no doubt Edinburgh is in an enviable position compared to other parts of the country thanks to investor confidence remaining high and we still have plenty of opportunities to come!

### 3. Coming soon: a visitor levy for Edinburgh

One of the opportunities we hope to grasp sooner rather than later is the introduction of the UK's first visitor levy.

Last winter we bucked national football trends and welcomed some of the strongest city centre performances in the UK. This summer, with the August festivals in full swing, Edinburgh feels as buzzing as ever, hot on the heels of the Taylor Swift's Eras Tour hype.

Whilst the undeniable success of our festivals and wider events industry is something to be celebrated, there are inevitable costs too - both in terms of Council resources and disruption - so it's vital that we get the balance right, particularly if we are to maintain our global reputation as a great place to visit - and as a happy place to live.





That's why we have long made the case to introduce a visitor levy, a small percentage fee on overnight accommodation, which can then be reinvested in the city. And, with MSPs voting to give us those powers in June, we're working closely with the sector, VisitScotland and other partners to develop a scheme that we're aiming to introduce from summer 2026.

Just to give you a feel of the scale and importance of this opportunity, had a 5% levy been in place purely over the weekend of Taylor Swift's concerts, we would have raised over £600,000 to reinvest in our city's culture, heritage and infrastructure - to the benefit of our visitors and, crucially, to the people who live here all year round. Now that's something to look forward to.

**4. High employment, highly skilled**

News that the UK labour market is continuing to cool is cause for concern, but thankfully it's not an issue we're experiencing here.

In fact, data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveals that in 2023, the city's employment rate was higher than across Scotland as a whole. An impressive 82.1% of us were in work last year, which is almost 8% above the national average.

We know of course that availability of skills remains a top issue for businesses, with research by the Institute of Directors in May suggesting almost half (45%) of business leaders feel skills and labour shortages are having a negative impact on their organisation. It's even more positive than that Edinburgh has one of the most skilled workforces in the country, with this talent pool cited as a strong pull for new entrepreneurship and innovation.

We're also seeing productivity rates and average earnings remain higher than any other UK city outside London, while we

continue to act as a magnet for foreign direct investment. Among the recent new arrivals attracted to Edinburgh from around the world are Canadian renewable energy developer Boralex; American fintech firm the Abacus Group; Norwegian subsea services specialist Argeo; Adidas; and Spanish offshore wind developer BlueFloat Energy, all bringing new jobs and capabilities to the capital. Considering the challenges continued to be faced by employers due to increasing costs, this progress is well worth acknowledging.

**5. Good progress on fair pay**

Of course, there is no point in celebrating the city's employment record if much of the work on offer isn't secure and fair - and our commitment to the real Living Wage remains as strong as ever.

Rising inflation and energy prices in recent years has exacerbated in-work poverty by reducing real incomes and cutting living standards for low-paid workers, and one of the best ways we can tackle this is through fairer pay.

So, I'm pleased to say Edinburgh has experienced a record-breaking couple of years for real Living Wage sign ups despite difficult business conditions for employers. There are now 720 accredited Living Wage employers in the city and it feels like we're witnessing a real movement, with major employers like Edinburgh Trams and Lothian Buses, charities like the Edinburgh Dog and Cat Home and independent businesses like the Edinburgh Bookshop and Alien Rock all taking the pledge.

I was encouraged by the commitments in the King's Speech that the UK Government will look to scrap zero hours contracts in one of several poverty-combatting policies, something our work looking at the city's gig economy

has highlighted as a barrier to financial security, particularly for young people.

For our part, we continue to work with the Festivals to focus on improving working practices for seasonal workers and the introduction of the Fair Fringe and Hospitality Charter and Edinburgh Festivals Workers' Welfare Commitment in 2018 were great steps forward. Following the adoption of the charter we crafted with the Forth Green Freeport to ensure the many jobs the Green Freeport creates are of a good quality with good working practices, we're now developing a Fair Work Charter for the city as a whole.

Everyone deserves a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.



**Cammy Day**  
Leader, the City of Edinburgh Council

# Edinburgh Napier University joins Scotland Beyond Net Zero

Edinburgh Napier University has signed up to Scotland Beyond Net Zero, an ambitious new climate and sustainability partnership aiming to accelerate Scotland's transition to a post-net-zero future.



Scotland Beyond Net Zero brings together climate and sustainability experts from Scotland's universities, harnessing research, data, and innovation to reduce Scotland's carbon footprint and support the country in achieving Net Zero by 2045.

This partnership marks the latest commitment to sustainability from Edinburgh Napier University. The University's core strategy includes a commitment to achieving net zero carbon in its operations by 2030, minimising its wider and legacy carbon footprint, and

promoting sustainable practices within and beyond its campuses.

ENU's sustainability goals include the work of academic, research, professional, and community-based expertise, to lead and encourage climate action.

In addition to being named as the top university in Scotland for environmental sustainability and ethics by the People and Planet University League in 2021 and 2022, the University was recently recognised by the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024 for its progress in several key areas of sustainable development.

Following an evaluation against the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Edinburgh Napier scored 76.1 out of 100, achieving an overall rank of 301-400 out of 1,963 participating institutions.

Professor Nick Antonopoulos, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Research & Innovation, said: "We have a strong history of enhancing environmental sustainability within and beyond the University, and have embedded fundamental and far-reaching environmental sustainability commitments within our core University Strategy.

"As an academic, research, professional, and community-focused organisation, we acknowledge our collective accountability and responsibility to mitigate existing and future impacts while recognising our historical impact.

"The collaborative partnership at the heart of Scotland Beyond Net Zero will help us drive results, facilitate meaningful action, and ensure Scotland plays a valuable role in tackling the impact of climate change, both at regional and global levels."

Scotland Beyond Net Zero brings together climate and sustainability experts from Scotland's universities, harnessing research, data, and innovation to reduce Scotland's carbon footprint and support the country in achieving Net Zero by 2045.

# Local presence today, global potential tomorrow: using colocation to access an ecosystem that drives growth

Data centres have undergone a profound, rapid evolution. They are no longer just data storage warehouses, or off-site facilities for computational heavy lifting.

In an age where modern commerce cannot be separated from technology, digital transformation has become the strategy for businesses to survive and grow in all markets.

Scotland has led the way in understanding the impact of this shift. In August 2023, the Independent Expert Group (IEG) on Unlocking the Value of Data delivered its report to the Digital Directorate, covering private sector use of public sector personal data. The Data-Driven Innovation initiative, based out of the University of Edinburgh has established six collaboration hubs to help ten industrial sectors become more innovative through data.

And throughout the private sector, data has revolutionised Scottish businesses and opened new opportunities. From the gaming excellence of Rockstar North and Earthbound, to the data created by the £2.5bn offshore windfarm industry, digital transformation is driving the Scottish economy.

At the heart of these programmes, sits the hardware and connectivity of a data centre facility.

Typically, as a business embraces such substantial growth, it will explore the benefits of a collocated data centre. These businesses recognise that they cannot continue with a rack of servers in the room between the kitchen and broom cupboard. Equally, they cannot invest millions in their own offsite facility, and they cannot risk putting their digital future into the hands of a large, 'hyperscale' cloud facility.

Instead, these companies seek out a digital infrastructure partner that can provide them with the resilience, opportunity, and connections that they need.

The first hallmark of such a partner is a local, regional presence and facility. Typically, this equates to a data centre no more than two hours away from the point of data creation or collation.

These shorter distances mean lower latency. Latency simply means delay



– technically it is the time it takes for a data packet to travel from one designated point to another. The lower the latency, the better. This was originally because it meant a better user experience, but following the dawn of real-time data analytics, machine-to-machine communication and of course, AI, latency has become a critical competitive advantage.

Aside from this local connection, the second hallmark of a genuine infrastructure partner is the ability to connect your business to an ecosystem of service providers. This forms the very fabric of your business growth. Data centres should be entry points for expansion: from local to regional, regional to national and national to global.

This means that they need to offer connectivity beyond the local facility. We have invested millions connecting all 12 Pulsant data centres to each other, with a resilient, high-speed private network, and

also partnered with SD-WAN providers, peering and internet exchanges.

The dividend of colocation should be that a company can realise both agility and speed in the here and now, without sacrificing the flexibility it needs to grow. Deciding on a data centre is the first step in developing a partnership with your digital infrastructure provider – and as such that partner should be able to yield immediate improvement as well as future benefit.

## About Pulsant

With three colocation facilities located on the outskirts of Edinburgh, Pulsant offer the most connected edge data centres in Scotland and north of London, with high density infrastructure solutions supported by a 100GB national network connecting to the rest of the UK.

[www.pulsant.com/colocation](http://www.pulsant.com/colocation)

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# Delivering the best possible outcomes with the Scottish and UK Governments

Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce has welcomed recent statements from both the Scottish and UK Governments, committing to resetting the relationship between them and work collaboratively to deliver “the best possible outcomes” for citizens in both nations.



This was something that the Chamber has been calling for in recent months, with the appointment of a new First Minister in Holyrood and a new Prime Minister in Westminster providing a unique opportunity to step back from some of the antagonism and blame culture that had developed between previous administrations. Instead, we have asked that governments at all levels work more closely together to deliver the kind of prosperous economy we need.

These declarations of constructive cooperation came as part of the recent King's Speech – the new UK Government's setting out of their legislative agenda for the year ahead – and the Scottish Government's response. There were other key wins for the Chamber in the Speech, particularly the prioritisation of economic growth and recovery from the cost of living crisis. As part of plans to deliver on this, we welcomed the commitment to create an Industrial Strategy, backed by the creation of a £7.3 billion National

Wealth Fund. It is hoped that this could leverage over £20 billion of private investment and help make green innovation the driver of future prosperity. The establishment of an Industrial Strategy Council alongside this, as “part of a new partnership with business and working people” in promoting growth, is also welcome.

Other headline announcements include an Employment Rights Bill, and measures to bring greater public control of the rail network infrastructure and passenger services. As with many of the Bills announced in the King's Speech, we await further detail to see what these will mean for our members. In the meantime we ask for genuine engagement and collaboration to create policies that will deliver better outcomes for businesses and their employees.

Grabbing the headlines in Scotland is of course the plan to establish a new publicly-owned clean energy company, GB Energy, in Scotland. Whilst the

location has not been announced yet, we have sent a joint letter with City of Edinburgh Council Leader Cammy Day to Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, and Ian Murray, Secretary of State for Scotland. In the letter, we outlined the reasons why GB Energy should be located in Edinburgh.

Finally, we will be keeping a close eye on plans to reform the planning system in England and Wales, along with a raft of measures to enable efforts to reach a new target of 1.5 million homes delivered over the next five years. Whilst policymaking in these areas is devolved to Scotland, it will be interesting to see if the Scottish Government makes similar moves to deliver the changes in policy needed to ease our housing emergency.

We also welcomed the appointment of several local MPs to key Ministerial positions in the new Government. Edinburgh's Ian Murray is the new Scotland Secretary, whilst Midlothian MP Kirsty McNeill has been given a junior role in the Scotland Office and East Lothian's Douglas Alexander will serve as Minister of State in the Department for Business and Trade. Having written to all our local MP hopefuls ahead of the election, the Chamber will now be getting in touch to congratulate the successful candidates and underline our ambition to work together on delivering the thriving and productive economy that we need.

We have asked that governments at all levels work more closely together to deliver the kind of prosperous economy we need.



Louise Albuero

### TATTU Restaurants Edinburgh appoints new Business Development Manager

I am thrilled to be starting a new role as the new Business Development Manager at TATTU Restaurants Edinburgh. Tattu, an independent family-run business founded in 2015 by two brothers, has always aimed to bring something unique and exciting to the UK culinary scene. Inspired by the art of 'Tattoo' and the ancient word 'Tatau,' meaning 'to make a mark,' Tattu merges stunning design with innovative Chinese cuisine. I hope to work closely together with Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, and utilise their amazing networks to show our partners a truly unique experience from the get go. I cannot wait to welcome you all to TATTU Edinburgh.

### New Construction Director at Cruden Homes

Cruden Homes, one of Scotland's largest independent house builders, has appointed Gregor Adam as its new Construction Director. Gregor joins the senior management team in a strategic move that cements the company's commitment to driving quality new homes and elevating the home-buying experience.

Gregor has extensive experience in the house building industry. Prior to this role, Gregor spent eight years at Robertson Group as a Construction Manager and began his career with Cala as a Graduate Construction Manager. His appointment is set to propel Cruden Homes towards its goal of achieving the highest standards of build quality and customer satisfaction, enhancing its already strong reputation as a long established and multi-award-winning homebuilder.

Gregor Adam, Construction Director for Cruden Homes, added: "It is exciting to be part of the team as we are poised for a new era of growth and innovation in the Scottish housing market. A major part of my role is to strengthen and enhance our construction department to drive the highest possible standards and to deliver excellence in our end product. This is the most fulfilling role I have taken on in years, and I welcome the opportunity to contribute to Cruden Homes' already enviable reputation as a major player in the Scottish housebuilding sector."



Gregor Adam



David Lindsay

### Prosperity 24/7 adds David Lindsay as a Senior Consultant

David Lindsay extensive experience in project & programme management and successful delivery of change initiatives in Edinburgh's financial sector makes him a valuable addition to the team. David's qualifications in Scaled Agile and Lean Six Sigma, along with his current studies towards the Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) qualification, demonstrates his dedication to professional development and delivering excellence for clients.

Paul Marshall, Managing Director, Scotland said, "These are exciting times for Prosperity in Scotland as we build our team. David's knowledge of the Edinburgh market combined with his ability to draw on our wider team of Jersey-based specialists, will enable us to bring effective solutions to our clients as they look to continue to evolve their businesses in line with the fast-pace of technology advancements and the needs of their own customers."

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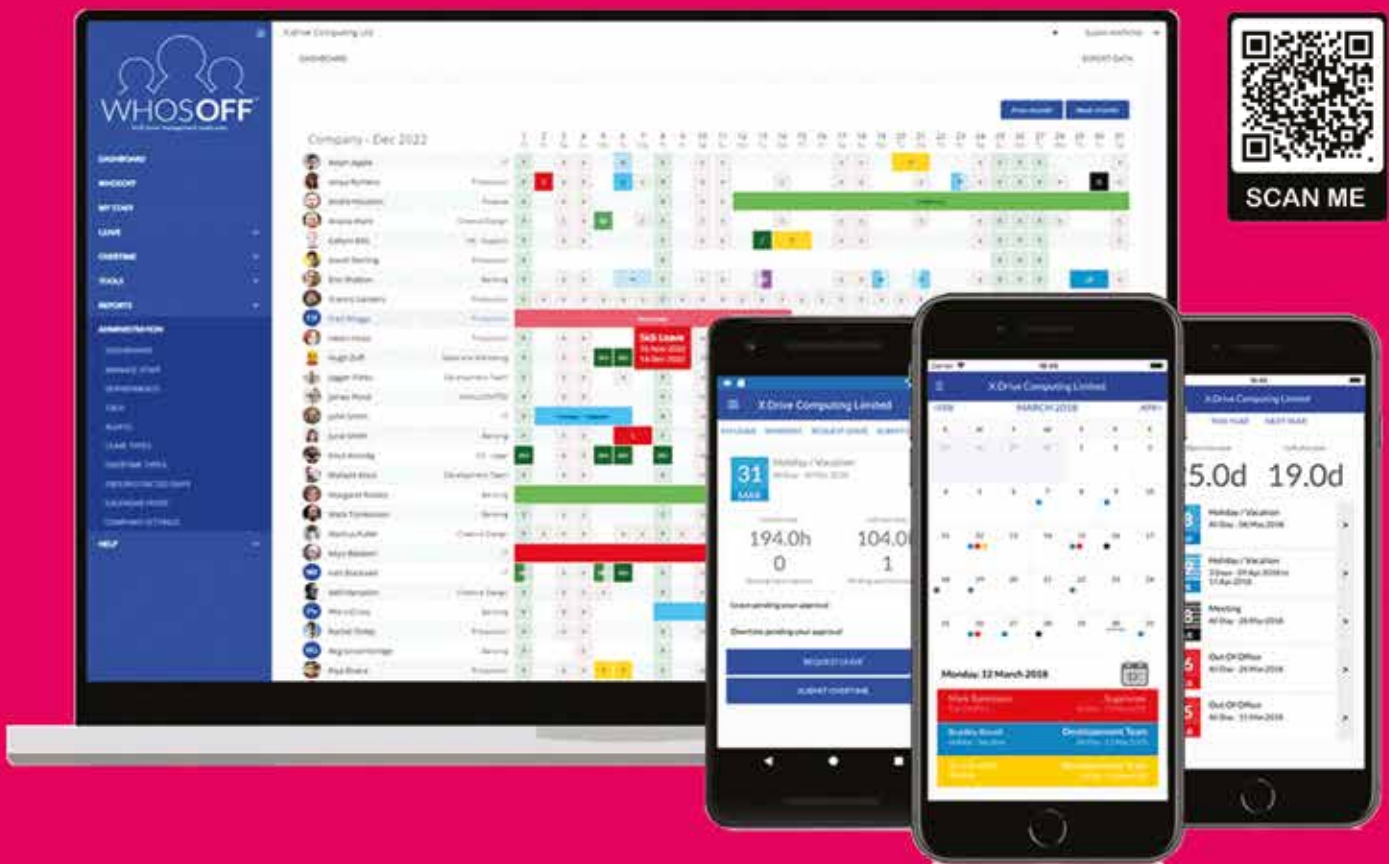
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