

Already, more FTSE100 companies are based in Edinburgh than any other area of the UK outside London, with key strengths in science and technology, financial and business services and tourism.

Edinburgh's city centre is home to a string of internationally successful businesses and The Exchange, Edinburgh's financial district, which features a cluster of corporate headquarters. The area has 92,900 sq m of office space and at least 13,000 jobs. Independent analysis ranks Edinburgh ahead of other major UK cities for financial service providers in terms of people, infrastructure, accessibility, real estate and living environment.

An unprecedented programme of regeneration and redevelopment is underway along the length of Edinburgh's main shopping thoroughfare, Princes St, and beyond. In 2008, the so-called String of Pearls Project saw the £2.6m refurbishment of St Andrew Square Garden open to the public for the first time.

To the south of the city, the Edinburgh Science Triangle is home to seven dedicated science parks, with more than 14,500 employees working in commercial research and development. At the heart is the Edinburgh BioQuarter (see page 59). As the UK's largest life sciences real estate development, it will position the city region as one of the world's top-ten centres for biomedical commercialisation.

Just 15 minutes from the city centre is one of Europe's premier business parks. Edinburgh Park (see page 44) is a 58- hectare business park home to 7,000 employees and more than 20 blue-chip companies including HSBC Securities, Aegon, Intelligent Finance and JP Morgan. North Edinburgh Ltd (NEL), the developer of Edinburgh Park, is currently expanding into its southern phase and planning permission is now being sought for development of a 3,900 sq m business village aimed at small to medium-sized companies as well as further hotel developments.

A new urban quarter is emerging in Edinburgh's Waterfront (see page 72). This is one of Europe's largest regeneration projects and will see a 5.7km stretch of waterfront transformed. Only 3km north of the city centre, Edinburgh's Waterfront comprises a mix of historical areas – each with outstanding development opportunities.

More than £6bn is being invested in the city's developments, providing more than 60,000 new jobs. Such foresight is essential if Edinburgh is to maintain its position as a key driver in the Scottish economy.

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“ The view from Princes Street is awe-inspiring. Old Edinburgh and the Castle rise up magnificently, looming over the New with magisterial dignity. It has ever been thus. Edinburgh: a city of contrasts. ”
 Ewan McNaught, 2004

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