

# Bridge to Business



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Fraser Phillips

## Bridge to Business and Excellence in Renewables

### Fraser Phillips, Chair, Fife Economy Partnership

Fraser Phillips, Chair of the Fife Economy Partnership, describes how Fife's businesses and public sector organisations are working together to grow Fife's economy.

**T**he Fife Economy Partnership is a group of businesses and public sector organisations who seek to develop ways to grow Fife's economy. Set up in 2008, our members come from the private and public sectors; Fife Chamber of Commerce, Fife Council, Scottish Enterprise, the University of St Andrews, Fife Colleges and Business Gateway.

As a cornerstone to achieving our ambition we launched the Fife Economic Strategy 2009-2020 which sets out the future direction for Fife's economy and outlines a number of priorities for the region over the next decade.

The Strategy's vision is to encourage sustainable economic growth and make Fife the easiest place to do business. To achieve this vision, we are focusing on growing existing businesses, extending employment and skills opportunities and developing Fife's competitive strengths.

Once defined by heavy engineering and industry, modern Fife has enormous potential to be more competitive and grasp new opportunities, in particular in renewable energy and tourism.

To make Fife the easiest place to do business, we are putting into place a flexible business infrastructure and simplified services responsive to new and growing businesses, thus ensuring Fife as the location of choice for investment from any industry sector.

Fife's inherent strength in natural resources, renewable energy, manufacturing and research is helping establish Fife as a centre of excellence for offshore wind, renewable energy and low carbon technology. Local educational establishments already have well established facilities for the education and training of future employees in these industries. Energy Park Fife provides Scotland with a worldclass facility and is becoming one of Europe's leading locations for renewable technology design, construction, service and maintenance.

The Fife Economic Strategy belongs to Fife's people and its businesses and everyone has a part to play in growing Fife's future. By working together we are positioning Fife as a location of choice to live, work, visit and invest, and ensuring our communities benefit from a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.



Peter Grant

## **Fife: a great place to live, work, visit and invest**

### **Councillor Peter Grant, Chair of the Fife Partnership Board**

Outlines the aim of community planning and the vision to strengthen Fife's future and make it a great place to live, work, visit and invest.

**A**s Leader of Fife Council and having lived in Fife for 28 years I know that Fife is a great place to live, work, visit and invest. In my role as Chair of the Fife Partnership Board, the community planning partnership for Fife, I am committed to delivering its vision of strengthening Fife's future.

Building a stronger, more flexible and diverse economy is a key priority for Fife's Community Plan. The Plan, an overarching strategy for Fife, highlights the challenges we face and empowers communities to respond. We are able to meet these challenges by investing in sectors of the economy with long term sustainability and which will bring jobs to the area, notably renewable energy and tourism.

Fife Council fully endorses Fife Economy Partnership's vision of making Fife the easiest place to do business. The Partnership is responsible for planning or overseeing the delivery of much of the infrastructure and a range of services affecting business operation and growth. It has produced the Fife Economic Strategy which challenges the Council to examine ways in which we interact with businesses to make it as straightforward as possible for them to work with us.

The framework of the Fife Economy Partnership supports a collaborative approach which has shown real results for Fife. Amazon's new development in Dunfermline is an excellent example of Fife's partnership working, between the Council's Invest in Fife team and Scottish Enterprise. It demonstrates Fife's ability to compete for major investment at an international level and cements our resolution that Fife is a great place to live, work, visit and invest.

[ Building a stronger, more flexible and diverse economy is a key priority for Fife's Community Plan. ]



# Invest in Fife?

Fiona Russell

**In Fife, the latest investment results reveal an encouragingly successful year of new jobs and business.**

In the last year, Invest in Fife secured £81m in inward investments, created 948 jobs, and assisted in seven successful investment projects, including major developments by Amazon, Shepherd Offshore, Fourstones Paper and Burntisland Fabrications (BiFab), as well as a number of smaller office-based projects.

For Ross Mackenzie, lead officer with Fife Council's Invest in Fife team, the figures are particularly heartening, as official Scotland-wide reports reveal that the economy is only "slowly" emerging from recession.

Mackenzie said: "To be bucking the trend of the tough Scottish economy is hugely uplifting. It is not luck, however, that has created this success but hard work from many people in the Invest in Fife project and across partner initiatives, such as Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International."

Invest in Fife was formed to promote Fife as a first class business location and to highlight the area's commercial capabilities and opportunities. The team advises, supports and assists businesses to expand, relocate, develop and invest in Fife.

The Invest in Fife team also seeks to attract business in existing and emerging sectors, such as renewable energy, tourism and financial services, in line with Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International.

At a time when commercial development in particular remains slow across the rest of Scotland, Mackenzie highlighted the developments at Amazon and also Diageo, which represent some of the largest of their kind currently being progressed in this country. Diageo last year announced a major expansion at its bottling facility with the creation of hundreds of new jobs.

He said: "We are delighted that these major companies see fit to bring their latest developments to Fife and have the confidence to invest in our region. Both these projects will bring millions of pounds of investment into Fife, leading to the creation of hundreds of new jobs and bringing greater confidence to the area."

"These ventures keep our workforce in employment and they offer future prosperity to youngsters going through our colleges. They also showcase Fife as a highly viable proposition for other

companies who may be thinking of investing, developing or relocating here. This helps underline the work that we are doing to make Fife the easiest place to do business."

It is clear that Fife has a great deal to offer companies of all sizes and outputs. Mackenzie pointed to Invest in Fife's comprehensive range of investor support services and said: "We work very closely with our partners, Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International, to ensure that companies are fully aware of the financial incentives and grants that might be available to them."

"This includes the Scottish Government's Regional Selective Assistance Scheme, but we also have our own experienced and knowledgeable advisors to offer further help."

Other advantages to investing in Fife include location, transport links and a highly skilled workforce. Mackenzie pointed out: "Fife has high quality land and buildings in the right place to meet the needs of many kinds of business and industry. The region is in an enviably central location and is very accessible

[ In keeping with the Fife Economy Partnership's ambition to make Fife the easiest place to do business, we believe Fife is the natural choice for investment. Our results over the last year demonstrate this, as well as our vision of being a great place to live, work, visit and invest. ]





thanks to excellent road, rail and sea links”.

“Fife boasts highly skilled personnel and strong links with its colleges and the University of St Andrews to ensure that a new workforce is emerging with the right skills for new and incoming businesses, especially in the renewables sector”.

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“Our results over the last year demonstrate this, as well as our vision of being a great place to live, work, visit and invest.”

**INVEST IN FIFE**

[ **Invest in Fife**  
 Ross Mackenzie, Lead Officer Investment  
 Economic Development, Enterprise & Protective  
 Services, Fife Council  
 Tel: 08451 55 55 55 + Ext 49 21 78  
[www.investinfife.co.uk](http://www.investinfife.co.uk)