

Douglas Ross launches jobs plan to 'power up' Scottish economy

- [Home](#)
- [Posts](#)
- [All News](#)
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Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross will today launch his first major policy paper, an ambitious jobs and economic recovery plan to “power up Scotland” and rebuild the economy stronger.

As the Scottish Government prepares to announce its Programme for Government, Douglas Ross has put forward a series of proposals to support and create jobs, promote business recovery in the short-term, and build a thriving, stronger Scottish economy long-term.

The *Power Up Scotland* jobs plan, which Douglas promised to deliver within a month of his election as Scottish Conservative leader, will be published today at a manufacturing plant in Inverness and includes the following policies:

- Sector-specific Job Security Councils to help laid-off workers transition and find skilled work, based on Sweden’s hugely successful retraining programmes.
- A Town Centre Rescue Plan to help small local shops adapt and free up planning restrictions.
- A ‘Scotland First’ procurement strategy to have the government spend more money locally.
- A Scottish education guarantee to age 18 and expanded adult learning programmes.
- Community Right to Buy schemes for local pubs and other employers in fragile areas.
- Scottish Enterprise reformed on regional lines and new Rural Growth deals to spread high-quality jobs and business growth across the country.
- A yellow/red card system for businesses who make late payments and bid for public work.
- A new research and development target with better incentives for innovation.
- A Hardship Fund for businesses facing localised lockdowns.

Douglas also called yesterday for accelerated infrastructure investment with proposals for a three-lane M8, a Scottish Smart Travel Card for contactless travel, faster rail links from Edinburgh to Aberdeen and Inverness, and a

joint UK-Scottish Government infrastructure vehicle.

Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross said: “In the biggest economic downturn of our lifetime, the UK Government stepped up and protected nearly a million Scottish jobs. Now the Scottish Government must match that ambition.

“My proposals won’t just protect jobs over the next few months, they will power up the Scottish economy and start creating the jobs of tomorrow, today. This detailed blueprint for the next phase of recovery will help workers retrain and find new skilled work, give town centres the tools they need to rebuild, and take every part of Scotland forward together.

“I will work with the Scottish Government on these proposals wherever possible but there is a clear contrast between what we see as Scotland’s priorities.

“I don’t believe Scottish people want a government that drags us back to the division of the past and wastes time on constitutional wrangling.

“I believe people want both of Scotland’s governments to co-operate, not compete. They want us to hand power back to communities, not hoard it in Edinburgh. They want long-term strategies that build for the future, not sticking plaster proposals that prove to be second-rate.

“Most of all, I believe Scottish people want action on jobs, now. They don’t want delays and excuses.

“This is a time of crisis for Scotland – but a moment of opportunity too. If we focus on the urgent priorities of Scottish people, we can restore and rebuild our economy stronger than ever.”

The report can be [viewed here](#).