

NEWS RELEASE

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT INTEGRAL TO ECONOMY

Scotland's historic environment is a vital part of the country's economy, Culture Minister Michael Russell told parliament today.

Speaking in a debate on the legacy of buildings and monuments, the Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution encouraged debate on how it can best be used to boost tourism, construction and regeneration.

The Minister said: "Clearly, there is enormous potential here to make creative coalitions in Scotland across all these boundaries, to realise the full value of our historic environment to our people and our economy. The potential here is staggering."

Figures published earlier this year by the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland showed that:

- The historic environment sector contributes more than £2.3 billion to Scotland's national gross value added (GVA), mainly through tourism, construction and regeneration. That is equivalent to 2.6 per cent of the total Scottish GVA
- It directly supports 41,000 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs. Taking account of indirect and induced effects, this figure rises to 60,000 FTE employees
- It compares strongly with other distinctive Scottish sectors (whisky, gin and vodka 43,300 and sport 45,500)

Today's debate follows a Heritage Summit held at Bute Hall on November 03, hosted by the Minister, bringing together interested parties to look at how to promote and protect our historic landscape of buildings and monuments.

The Minister added: "I have no doubt at all about the contribution the historic environment can make in many ways to achieving this Government's purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth.

"The time is ripe. We have major opportunities, with changes taking place in various parts of the sector."

Notes for editors

1. Michael Russell MSP, Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution was launching the Scottish Government Debate on Scotland's Historic Environment. The motion is "This Parliament welcomes the enthusiasm, passion and co-operation shown by all the participants at the first *Summit for the Built and Historic Environment* held at the Bute Hall in Glasgow on Tuesday 3 November 2009 and recognises the valuable resource for our people and our economy represented by Scotland's rich and varied heritage."
2. Background and further quotes on specific subjects raised in the debate are attached below. Transcript of the Minister's full speech is available.
3. Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment. The agency is fully accountable to Scottish Ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament. For more information visit www.historic-scotland.gov.uk
4. Historic Scotland is delighted to be supporting the 2009 Year of Homecoming with a series of initiatives including family trails, spectacular events and the creation of a Homecoming Pass for heritage attractions in association with other heritage organisations.
5. Register for media release email alerts from www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/news.

Contact: Lesley Brown
Direct line: 0131 668 8603
Email: lesley.brown@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
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BACKGROUND

Historic Scotland partnership with Glasgow School of Art Digital Design Studio

Historic Scotland and the Digital Design Studio have formed a partnership to carry out the Scottish Ten project to create 3D models of Scotland's five World Heritage Sites along with five international sites. It will showcase how cutting edge laser technology can be used to aid the conservation, maintenance and management of our globally significant sites.

The scanning team has already begun work on the first Scottish site - New Lanark. A programme to scan The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh, The Heart of Neolithic Orkney, St Kilda and The Antonine Wall is being prepared.

Next year the team will scan Mount Rushmore, where the Minister announced the project on July 04 this year.

The Minister said: "I am delighted that Historic Scotland has today signed an agreement with Glasgow School of Art to launch a joint venture which formally brings together the expertise of both public bodies in the digital documentation of the historic environment, using laser technology adapted from the US Star Wars programme and world leading digital visualisation skills.

"We will invest £650,000 to deliver the Scottish Ten project to record the five Scottish World Heritage sites, and to undertake five international projects to showcase our expertise and to ensure we stay ahead of the field. The team are commencing the first international project at Mount Rushmore next Spring and have been overwhelmed by the media interest in both the UK but most especially overseas.

"This innovative partnership demonstrates our ability to innovate in the public sector, but also that the heritage sector can bring a broad range of benefits – some surprising."

Seona Reid, Director of Glasgow School of Art, said: "The GSA's Digital Design Studio is internationally recognised as a leader in 3D visualisation and interactive technology and this project clearly demonstrates the practical application of their work.

"Using the most advanced laser scanning technology to develop an exceptionally accurate, down-to-the-millimetre, three-dimensional archival record of world-heritage sites, the project will digitally preserve the sites for future generations and we are delighted to be working with Historic Scotland on this internationally significant project."

Battle of Bannockburn 700th anniversary

The National Trust for Scotland and Historic Scotland will work together to look at improving the facilities at the NTS' property at Bannockburn in time for the 2014 anniversary.

The discussion about the interpretation at the centre is at an early stage and will involve the award winning teams responsible for the Logie Schoolhouse (NTS) and Stanley Mills (HS).

It also follows the largest joint ticketing arrangement between the two organisations to mark the Year of Homecoming.

The Minister said: "I have asked my officials at Historic Scotland to work in partnership with the National Trust for Scotland to develop proposals to improve the visitor facilities at Bannockburn in time for the 700th anniversary of the battle in 2014, and to explore how more synergy between Bannockburn and Stirling Castle can be achieved."

Kate Mavor, Chief Executive of the National Trust for Scotland, said: "Following on from the success of the Culloden visitor centre, we look forward to working with Historic Scotland to make a visit to the Bannockburn battlefield even more informative and enjoyable for everyone."

Castles Initiative

The Castle's Initiative draws together examples of previous castle restoration to act as a guide for people contemplating a renovation project. Conservation architects Simpson and Brown have been contracted to co-write the guide and members of the Scottish Castles Association have advised on the project.

An initial list of castles and tower houses that would be appropriate for sympathetic reuse have been assessed and are listed on the Historic Scotland website. More will be added as the project progresses.

The Minister said: "I want to draw attention to the Castles Initiative – a wholly new way of working for the agency. There is a long tradition of successful castle and tower house restoration in Scotland.

"Restoration will not be an appropriate course of action in every case. However, I am delighted Historic Scotland believes there is potential for more and is making the process of taking forward restoration projects more straightforward and transparent.

"The initiative is designed to encourage investment in this aspect of Scotland's built heritage by providing advice on processes and best practices and by offering exemplars of successful past projects."

Commonwealth Games

Historic Scotland is working with Glasgow City Council to identify building repair grant funds to areas tied to the Commonwealth Games. Applications will still be

subject to scrutiny by the Historic Scotland Grant assessment panel but the council will be able to prioritise their applications.

A survey of the historic buildings of the area will also bring together information about the history of this part of the city to help promote it during the games duration.

The Minister said: “I am delighted that the agency is working closely with the city to give it the final say over how grants for historic buildings are using in Glasgow in the run-up to the Commonwealth Games.”

The War Memorials Trust

The Minister opened the debate by recognising the work of the War Memorials Trust. The Trust provides funding for the maintenance of memorials across Scotland.

The Minister said: “Every city, town and village throughout Scotland has a memorial dedicated to the war dead. The trust supports the protection and conservation of these poignant memorials, whose relevance, sadly, does not diminish with time.

“I am proud that the Scottish Government works in partnership with the Trust to ensure these beacons survive to remind future generations of the greatest sacrifice of all. Our funding to the Trust, £30,000 a year, provided through Historic Scotland, has meant that War Memorials in locations across Scotland, as far flung as Orkney, Fort William, Penicuik, Glasgow, Ayr and Campbeltown, have had vital restorative works carried out on them over the last year.”

HS delegation to local authorities

Historic Scotland has recently completed a three-month pilot project, allowing three local authorities to take decisions on minor works to B-listed properties without the need to consult with Historic Scotland.

Glasgow City, City of Edinburgh and Perth and Kinross councils took part in the project to identify what duplication could be removed from the listed building consent system.

The Minister said: “I welcome the steps being taken by Historic Scotland, in common with the other statutory bodies working to modernise planning in Scotland, to ensure that their planning related work is proportionate, transparent and timely.

“A 3-month pilot with these authorities, focusing on minor works to category B listed buildings, removed over eight-years of delay from the system.”