

Employment opportunities

Cothroman Cosnaidh



Choosing to live in the Highlands offers many work opportunities. Tourism is vitally important to the area with jobs available in accommodation, visitor attractions, transport, retail, food and drink and leisure.

The service sector, which is characterised by the public administration and tourism industries, accounts for over two thirds of employment. Agriculture, fisheries and forestry - the primary sector - are also large employers. Aquaculture, especially salmon farming, is an important part of the Highland economy.

Small firms dominate employment in the Highlands with business start up rates higher than the Scottish average. New activities in key technology

industries such as medical products and pharmaceuticals, contrast with traditional sectors such as construction and oil-related engineering.

Decommissioning of the Dounreay nuclear power plant in Caithness is creating a cluster of high-tech engineering firms in Thurso and Wick.

The growth of the retail sector, particularly in Inverness, provides flexible work patterns at the wide range of high street, grocery and specialist shops the Highland capital has to offer.

Couple all of this with a modern telecommunications network and you have an area that is ready to do business with the rest of the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

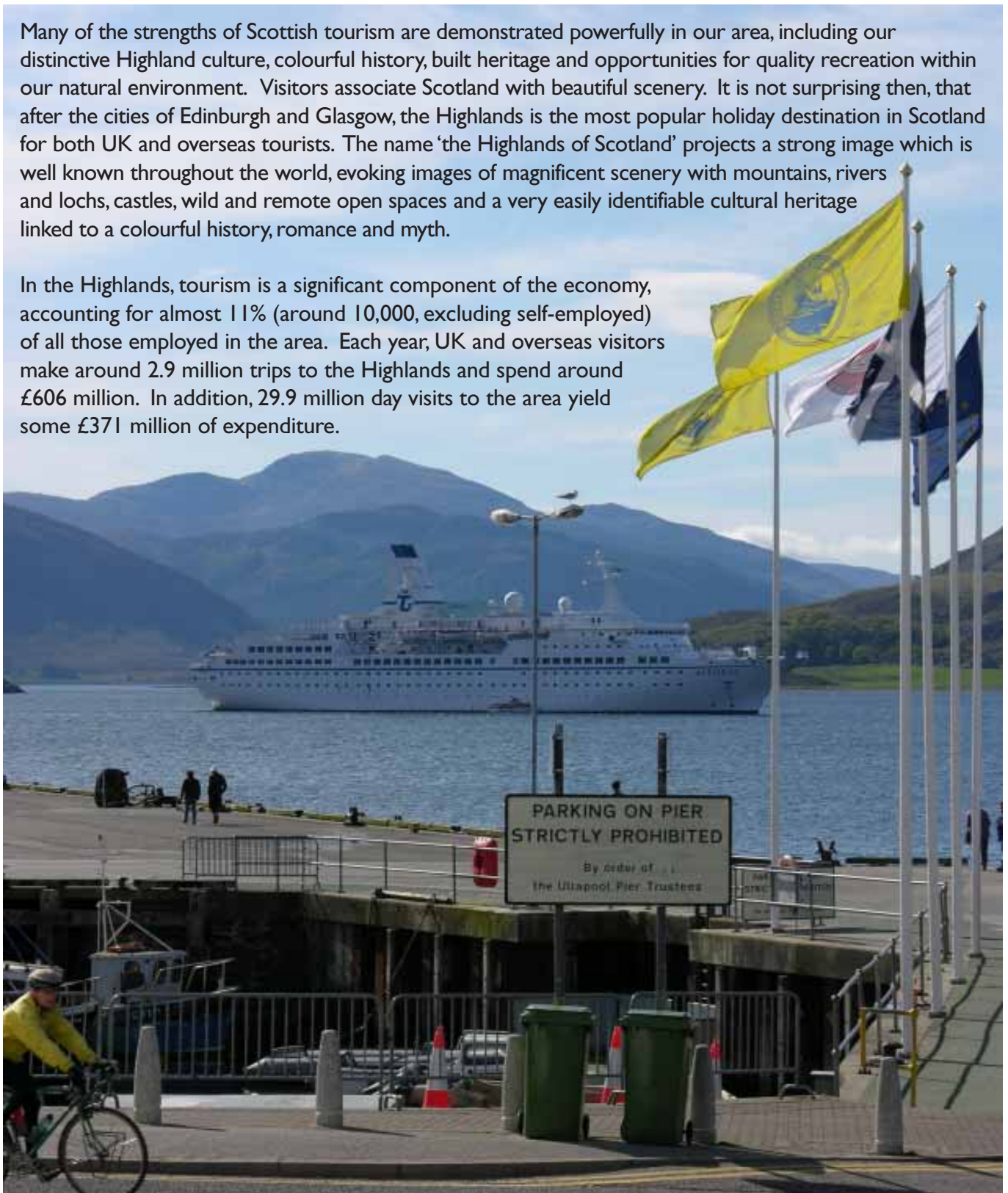
Tourism in the Highlands

Turasachd air a' Ghàidhealtachd

Highland Spotlight
Sùil air a' Ghàidhealtachd

Many of the strengths of Scottish tourism are demonstrated powerfully in our area, including our distinctive Highland culture, colourful history, built heritage and opportunities for quality recreation within our natural environment. Visitors associate Scotland with beautiful scenery. It is not surprising then, that after the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, the Highlands is the most popular holiday destination in Scotland for both UK and overseas tourists. The name 'the Highlands of Scotland' projects a strong image which is well known throughout the world, evoking images of magnificent scenery with mountains, rivers and lochs, castles, wild and remote open spaces and a very easily identifiable cultural heritage linked to a colourful history, romance and myth.

In the Highlands, tourism is a significant component of the economy, accounting for almost 11% (around 10,000, excluding self-employed) of all those employed in the area. Each year, UK and overseas visitors make around 2.9 million trips to the Highlands and spend around £606 million. In addition, 29.9 million day visits to the area yield some £371 million of expenditure.



Technology and emerging growth sectors

Teicneòlas agus roinnean ùra eile



The business base of the Highlands has broadened considerably in the last 10-20 years with considerable encouragement of Highlands and Islands Enterprise and before it the Highlands and Islands Development Board. New technology, medical research, service industries, manufacturing and renewable energy have been added to long-standing mainstays of agriculture, tourism, textiles and food and drink.

Contact centres, covering a range of activities including IT/technical helpdesks, and back office processing, have been one of the major success stories in recent years employing well over 3,000 people.

Although still in its infancy, renewables - which consists of wind, wave, tidal and wood fuel

resources - has immense potential for the area's economy although this is highly dependent on strengthening the area's ability to export electricity to the rest of the UK.

The healthcare and biotechnology sectors employ thousands in the Highlands. Most notably the burgeoning manufacturing activity is led by LifeScan Scotland Ltd, which manufactures innovative diagnostic products from its Inverness base where over 1,200 people work.

Many businesses, organisations and individuals are already enjoying the benefits of broadband which is particularly useful in the creative industries like graphic design, television and film, which form a significant sector in the Highlands.

Public administration

Riannachd Phoblach

Like many local economies, jobs in the public sector make a major contribution.

The Highland Council alone provides employment for 12,438 people, the large majority in local communities around the Highlands. Strategic decisions on an annual budget of more than £500 million are taken at its headquarters in Inverness.

The Council has an established network of 37 one-stop advice and information centres called Service Points which ensures the Council's services are accessible, effectively delivered and are a visible influence across the area.

It is responsible for a range of frontline services such as education, support to children and families, community care, housing, council tax collection, planning and development, roads and transport, food safety, animal welfare, leisure facilities, refuse collection and waste management.

NHS Highland - the region's supplier of health services - provides employment for around 7,500 at their hospitals and other facilities which reach out across the Highland area. Nursing staff, doctors, allied health professionals, scientists and support staff, such as IT professionals, administrators and hospital porters, all play a part

in delivering a first class healthcare service.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise employs 600 economic and social development staff - one-third of whom are employed at its core in Inverness and the majority at its network of local enterprise companies and Careers Scotland centres in the north and west of Scotland.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) - the public body with responsibility for conservation, enhancement, enjoyment, understanding and sustainable use of natural heritage, is moving its national headquarters from Edinburgh to Inverness by 2006. This will add more than 200 jobs to the 150 SNH staff already based in the Highlands.

Dispersing public sector jobs like those at SNH is a stated priority of the Scottish Executive. This means areas like the Highlands may benefit from the relocation of other public sector departments in the future.

Other agencies represented in the Highlands include the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Water, Communities Scotland, the Crofters Commission, the Scottish Executive's Environment and Rural Affairs Department and VisitScotland.





Decommissioning at Dounreay

Dùnraath a' dol à seirbheis

*Highland Spotlight
Sùil air a' Ghàidhealtachd*

Safely dismantling the legacy of Britain's civil nuclear research programme is as big a challenge to today's scientists and engineers as it was to their predecessors during its construction in the middle of the 20th century.

Closing down the Dounreay nuclear establishment on the north Caithness coast near Thurso has brought demands for a new generation of skilled, highly trained and motivated workers. The process is bringing new jobs and enterprise and innovation to an area reinvigorated by the challenge of safely dismantling the fast breeder reactor experiment.

At Dounreay, a £2.7 billion clean-up programme is seeding new courses for academic and vocational qualifications to nurture a new generation of professional and skilled staff in the engineering and modern science fields. Now, more than 2,000 people work at the site - one in every five jobs in Caithness and north Sutherland depends on decommissioning at Dounreay. About £80 million a year finds its way into the economy of the Highlands in general and Caithness in particular through salaries, pensions, contracts and sub-contracts. The average salary at the facility is almost 50 per cent higher than the average for the area. The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority - the managers of Dounreay - have recruited over 1,000 apprentices over the years across a range of disciplines from secretarial to scientific.

Contractors across a wide range of professions are used at Dounreay including engineering, radiological protection, planning, environmental, safety case writers and waste management experts.

The expertise currently being developed at the Dounreay site will increase in demand throughout the UK and abroad as more of the world's early experiments with atomic technology reach the end of their natural lives.

Developments like The Forss Business and Technology Park near Dounreay have the potential to sustain economic development beyond the closure of the site. While it is currently focused on the decommissioning process, it has the potential to diversify into areas such as offshore oil and gas and the emerging renewables sector.

While the decommissioning of Dounreay has a limited time frame of around 30 years, the expertise, knowledge and businesses that are currently growing up around it should therefore be sustained much further beyond this, providing jobs and security for decades to come.



Construction - a wide choice of careers for all ages

Obair togail - roghainn dhreuchdan dha gach aois

The construction sector is an important employer in the Highlands, particularly in rural communities. The sector incorporates site preparation, installation (including electrical and plumbing activities), building completion and the rental of construction equipment.

While it is dependent on national trends, the construction sector is buoyant with healthy demand for new buildings and infrastructure. This has resulted in demand for relevant skills and labour.

The sector is an important source of work for young people seeking to train as modern apprentices. Hundreds are employed each year on three to four year training apprenticeships, mixing formal college training with on the job experience.

Skills in business development, management, supervision, ICT, health and safety and crafts are increasingly important as is multi-skilling.

