



NEWS RELEASE

Heritage investment reaps economic rewards

The Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) welcomes new research demonstrating the hugely significant contribution that Scotland's historic environment makes to the Scottish economy. This crucial information will be presented this week at the HEACS (the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland) national swansong conference, the advisory body having been recently abolished by government as part of its simplification process. Culture Minister Michael Russell has welcomed the research, saying "For the first time we have clear evidence of just how much our historic environment contributes, not only to our sense of identity and place, but also to our national economy." Simon Gilmour, a Director of the Built Environment Forum Scotland, welcomes the recognition made in the report that while traditionally the historic environment sector has argued for increased investment to ensure the protection and enhancement of the historic environment, the research findings make a strong *economic* rationale for increased investment as well.

The research by ECOTEC provides evidence to show that the economic contribution of the historic environment is comparable with many other significant industries; directly supporting approximately 41,000 FTE (full-time equivalent) employees; contributing in excess of £2.3 billion to Scotland's national GVA (gross value added); and accounting for an estimated 2.5% of Scotland's total employment. The study focused on three areas where the historic environment contributes to the economy; the core organisations whose principal purpose is to conserve or present the historic environment; the built heritage construction sector (covering direct repair and maintenance output in relation to the nation's historic (pre-1919) building stock and infrastructure); and tourism (in particular direct tourism expenditure by visitors principally attracted to Scotland as a result of the historic environment).

The findings highlight the need for increased awareness of the importance of the historic environment to the Scottish economy, that there is a compelling case for increased investment in the historic environment, and that there needs to be increased awareness of the importance of the historic environment to employment in Scotland. Significantly, historic environment-related jobs are by their very nature internal to Scotland and non-exportable. The report refers to a 'virtuous circle' of investment in the built heritage construction sector – with activity generating not only jobs but also improvement to the condition of Scotland's wealth of historic buildings, thereby attracting more visitors and producing wider economic and social benefits.

Ends

Notes to editors:

The HEACS report and research undertaken by ECOTEC can be found at:
<http://www.heacs.org.uk/newsreleases/2009/economic.htm>

The research found that the historic environment:

- Supports more than 60,000 full time employees
- Contributes in excess of £2.3 billion to Scotland's GVA (gross value added)
- Supports 20,000 employees in the construction industry and 37,000 in tourism
- Accounts for 2.5 per cent of Scotland's total employment.

The research will be presented and discussed at HEACS' national conference *Past Forward: Celebrating and Promoting our Historic Environment*, on Wednesday 20th May 2009 at Dynamic Earth.

The Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) is a forum of non-governmental organisations that work within the built environment sector in Scotland. Performing an intermediary role, BEFS exists to support its members by raising awareness of, and facilitating joint working on, strategic issues of common interest.

For further information on BEFS visit: www.befs.org.uk

Contact: Jo Robertson, Forum Co-ordinator

Telephone: 0131 220 6241

Email: jrobertson@befs.org.uk

Issue date: 18th May 2009