



City-Region Deal
Cùmhnant Baile-Roinne

INVERNESS AND HIGHLAND

CITY REGION DEAL

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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FOLLOW THIS LINK TO READ THE CITY DEAL AGREEMENT: CITY REGION DEAL DOCUMENT

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/18274/city-region_deal_signatory_document

AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE LEAD AUTHORITY

I signed the Inverness and Highland City-Region deal along with Lord Dunlop, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, and Keith Brown Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work on 30 January 2017. This was the culmination of over two year's work including the signing of a Heads of Terms agreement on 22 March 2016.

Through the City-Region Deal, the UK Government, the Scottish Government, The Highland Council and their local partners are working to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Over the next 10 years, the UK Government will invest up to £53.1m, and the Scottish Government up to £135m through the City-Region Deal.

The investment through the City-Region Deal, will increase the number of well paid jobs, retain and attract young people, and promote innovation, internationalisation and new partnerships between the region's small businesses; it will facilitate the development of a skilled workforce to meet employer demands. The Deal will also improve road infrastructure, open up land for new housing and commercial development, and provide capacity to support employment, housing and property growth across the region.

By acting as an engine of change, the City-Region Deal projects will create opportunities and synergies greater than the sum of their parts and support the development of the Highlands as a place that will attract, retain and develop talent.



Margaret Davidson leader of Highland Council



INVERNESS AND HIGHLAND CITY- REGION DEAL OVERVIEW

The UK Government, the Scottish Government, the Highland Council and their local partners are working through the City-Region Deal to address the challenges currently facing the Region, and to capitalise on its substantial opportunities. The overarching aim is to:

- help to rebalance the population through the aim of attracting and/or retaining an additional 1,500 young people in the 18-29 age group;
- create 1,125 direct jobs with a further 2,200 jobs in construction;
- help to upskill the labour market to move to a high wage high skill economy adding an extra £100m pa to the regional economy;
- deliver 6,000 homes over a 20 year period, of which 1,600 will be affordable; and
- deliver private sector investment of £800m over a 20 year period in the region.

The Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal has 6 partners who co-ordinate and drive the component projects. These organisations are The Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the University of the Highlands and Islands, Transport Scotland, Albyn Housing Association Limited and HITRANS. Not only are these organisations funded to take forward the projects, but they have sourced and added their own funds to the projects (see investment breakdown).

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Put our communities at the heart of the design and delivery of services at a local level.

- Work collaboratively to drive economic growth and ensure our infrastructure meets the needs of expanding businesses and population.
- Support children to learn and thrive by delivering a whole system approach to education and integrated children's services.
- Protect the vulnerable in our communities, promote fairness and welcome diversity.
- Make the Highlands a stronger and more resilient region.
- Protect and enhance Highland's influence and reputation nationally and internationally.

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE

To generate sustainable and inclusive economic growth across the region.

To make the Highlands and Islands a highly successful and competitive region, in which increasing numbers of people choose to live, work, study and invest. In order to do this we aim to accelerate business growth, strengthen communities, Support growth sectors and develop regional attractiveness.

UNIVERSITY OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

To have a transformational impact on the prospects of our region, its economy, its people and communities.

The University of The Highlands and Islands is the UK's leading integrated university. Its distinctive partnership of 13 colleges and research institutions is locally based, but has national and international reach.

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

To deliver a safe, efficient, cost-effective and sustainable transport system for the benefit of the people of Scotland, playing a key role in helping to achieve the Scottish Government's Purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish.

Transport Scotland's purpose is to support and advise the Scottish Government on strategy and policy options for transport in Scotland, and increase sustainable economic growth through the development of national transport projects.

ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LIMITED

Everyone in the Highlands well housed within sustainable communities.

To build, manage and maintain a quality housing stock in the Highlands, and to support communities to thrive. To innovate to meet the challenges of the future.

HITRANS

Working hard with Councils, the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, HIE, transport operators and other stakeholders to improve transport services and infrastructure in the north of Scotland and on routes to the Highlands and Islands.

Regional transport partnerships strengthen the planning and delivery of regional transport so that it better serves the needs of people and businesses. HITRANS brings together local authorities and other key stakeholders to take a strategic approach to transport in their area. HITRANS is, of course, only one of a number of organisations which determine transport provision in our area

CITY DEAL OVERVIEW CONTINUED

In addition to the project leading partners, there are a number of significant contributing partners and organisations who support the deal via the provision of expertise and access to networks, providing the role of the critical friend and selling the benefits of the deal and the region. These include but are not limited to:

- Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI)
- National Health Service Highland
- The Highland Economic Forum
- The Community Planning Partnership

INVESTMENT BREAKDOWN

Whilst this is the starting position, it is likely that the investment and funding will increase as further European and private sector money will be attracted. The table below contains information on the funding of the projects.

PROJECT	UKG (000's)	SG (000's)	THC (000's)	UHI (000's)	HIE (000's)	ALBYN (000's)	TOTAL
Deal Development Funding	£100	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100,000
School of Health & Life Sciences	£9,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£9,000,000
Northern Innovation Hub**	£11,000	£0	£0	£0	£5,000	£0	£16,000,000
Joint Digital Programme	£20,000	0	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£30,000,000
Land Remediation	£10,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£10,000,000
City Centre Wi-Fi, & Tower*	£3,000	£0	£300	£0	£60	£0	£3,360,000
Science Skills Academy	£0	£3,000	£20	£20	£20	£0	£3,060,000
Innovative Assisted living	£0	£3,000	£0	£0	£0	£2,224	£5,224,000
Inverness Castle 8**	£0	£15,000	£15,000	£0	£0	£0	£30,000,000
Affordable housing	£0	£5,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,000,000
East Link & Longman	£0	£109,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£109,000,000
West Link and Inshes	£0	£0	£64,356	£0	£0	£0	£64,356,000
Prudential Borrowing (Hsg)	£0	£0	£30,000	£0	£0	£0	£30,000,000
	£53,100	£135,000	£119,676	£20	£5,080	£2,224	£315,100,000

*HC Includes Common good funding

**Includes European Funding

***Includes Lottery Funding

THEMES AND PROJECTS

INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal is, overall, about trying to achieve inclusive economic growth. In addition to the component projects, there are themes around which the outputs of projects can deliver benefits great than the sums of the project parts.

CONNECTED

Being on the western periphery of Europe, with a massive geographic area, creates connectivity challenges in terms of physical challenges and also digital connectivity. Overcoming these challenges will go a long way to enabling the growth of the Highlands' economy.

YOUNG PEOPLE

There is a need to rebalance the population of the Highlands to attract and retain more young people to live, work and study in the region. This will ensure future growth is possible by retaining the young people who will be the future of the region, providing them both with the skills needed, and housing that will encourage them to stay.

INNOVATION

Whilst unemployment is low in the Highlands, wages are also low and without change this will remain the same. Innovation is key to creating new products and services, and changing how businesses operate so that they can grow, creating additional and higher value jobs.

SKILLS

From developing the entrepreneurial skills needed to grow the economy, to supporting people into higher skilled posts that will be created; from enthusing future STEM practitioners, to supporting them to higher attainment levels, skills development is of central importance to the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal.

DIGITAL CAPABILITY

Given the region's geography, digital connectivity and capability can act to enhance the region's growth capacity. It can enable collaboration beyond the region, and make the region more attractive to businesses and young people by being more connected.

PHYSICAL RENEWAL

In addition to innovation and human capital, there is a need to review the physical infrastructure, both for transport purposes but also to act as places to do business, such as Inverness Castle, The Centre for Health Innovation on Inverness Campus and the land reclamation project at the Longman.

TOURISM

Not surprisingly for an area of such outstanding natural beauty, and one so rich in heritage (natural and otherwise), tourism is included as a theme on its own. Any economy must build on its assets, and creating more wealth and high value jobs is a key challenge for the tourism sector.

THEMES AND PROJECTS CONTINUED

PROJECT	OUTCOMES	THEMES
Science Skills Academy	More young people taking STEM subjects and higher levels of attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Young people • Innovation • Digital
Inverness Castle	Creating a world class visitor experience and attracting more visitors to stay longer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Digital • Skills • Physical renewal
Affordable Housing	Enabling people and especially young people to live and work in the right places for them and the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young People • Physical renewal • Inclusive Growth
Innovative Assisted Living (FIT House)	Enabling vulnerable people to live in the community longer and safer and learning lessons of national importance from their experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical renewal • Innovation • Digital capability
UHI Centre for Health Innovation	New ways to support patients and in particular those in remote communities. Creating services, products and companies to grow the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Digital Capability • Skills
Longman Land Remediation	To create land that can be used to support the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical renewal • Innovation
Northern Innovation Hub	To support and grow businesses to be more productive, modernise and ultimately provide more high value jobs in the highlands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Skills • Digital Capability • Young People • Tourism
Digital	To provide the connectivity required to shorten distances and enable the digitisation of the Highlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Skills • Digital Capability • Young People • Tourism
Longman Interchange and East Link, West link and Inshes	To reduce journey times, connect the highlands and deliver development land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Renewal • Tourism • Connected
Air Access	To ensure the Highlands is as connected as possible in terms of air travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Connected
Skills and Employability	To ensure those who are currently furthest away from employment are not left further behind and indeed are encouraged into works and given the skills to succeed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Young People • Innovation

GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW

The Highland Council serves a third of the land area of Scotland, including the most remote and sparsely populated parts of the UK mainland. We have the 7th highest population of the 32 authorities in Scotland. The total land area, including all islands, at low water is 26,484 square kilometers. It is 10 times larger than Luxembourg, 20% larger than Wales, and nearly the size of Belgium.

The length of coastline, including islands, at low water is 4,905 kilometers, 21% of the Scottish total and, excluding islands, is 1,900 kilometers (49 per cent of the Scottish Mainland).

The Highlands have seen significant population growth over the last 30 years. They have benefitted from the creation of the University of the Highlands and Islands, together with major investments in digital infrastructure and transport. However the Highlands also faces challenges, particularly the out-migration of young people due to a lack of higher education and employment opportunities, low productivity and a low wage economy.

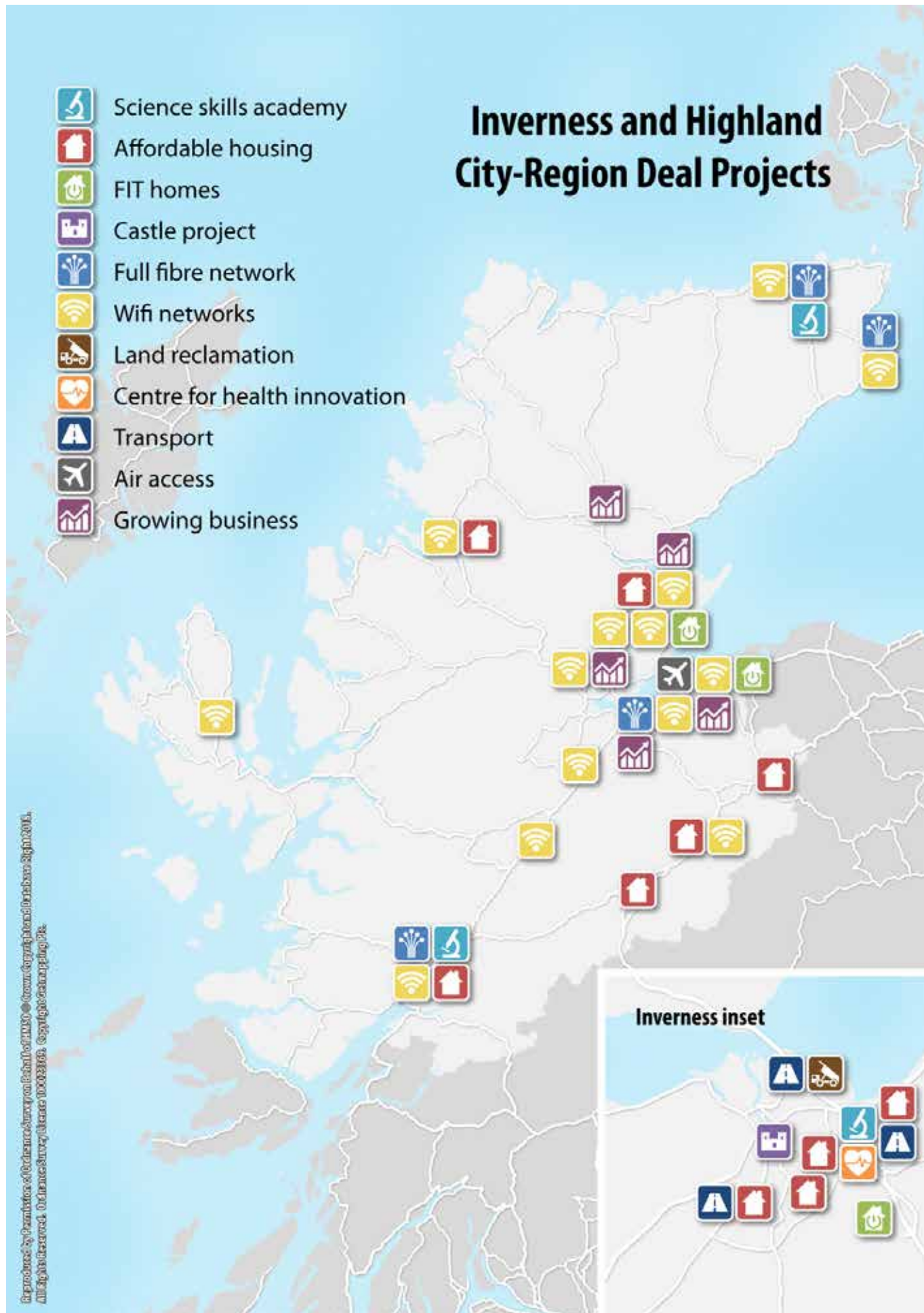
Results from the 2011 Census show that the population of the Highlands on census day was 232,132, increasing to 235,180 in mid 2017. Since 1996, the population of the Highlands has increased by 12.5%. This is the 7th highest percentage change out of the 32 council areas in Scotland. Over the same period, Scotland's population rose by 6.1%.

Given the nature of the geography of the Highland Council area, ensuring the dispersal of projects throughout the Highlands has been an important factor. While there are a higher number of projects within the Inverness area, this is as should be expected given the role of Inverness as the economic engine for the Highlands. However the map at Fig :1 below, shows a wide dispersion of the projects throughout the Highland Council area.

GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW CONTINUED

Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal Projects

-  Science skills academy
-  Affordable housing
-  FIT homes
-  Castle project
-  Full fibre network
-  Wifi networks
-  Land reclamation
-  Centre for health innovation
-  Transport
-  Air access
-  Growing business



Map produced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HM Government. © Crown Copyright and Ordnance Survey 2014. All Rights Reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence 100023168. Copyright Ordnance Survey.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The table below provides a view of the spend for 2017/18, and columns B and C show the cumulative position since the start of the City-Region Deal. Note £3.1m of funding was available prior to the City-Region Deal being signed. The grant draw down for 17/18 was £1,174,963.

In terms of spend against the original profile, agreed September 2016, spend is behind what was suggested. This was set at a time when planning for the projects was not complete and significantly before business cases were signed off. In addition spend against the digital project has been very problematic.

All business cases bar Digital are signed off and activity and associated spend on projects is ramping up. Work continues with Scottish Government colleagues to manage the flow of money to the projects and ensure financial planning is aided by effective and transparent information.

INVERNESS AND HIGHLAND CITY-REGION DEAL 2017-18 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	A	B	C
	Actual spend 2017-18	Total Spend to 2017-18	Total Grant Received to 2017-18
PROJECT	£	£	£
Deal Development Funding	31,397	84,787	(100,000)
UHI Centre for Health Innovation	67,879	67,879	(227,444)
Northern Innovation Hub	36,288	36,288	(67,238)
Joint Digital Programme	0	0	0
Land Remediation	123,366	123,366	(250,000)
City Centre Wi-Fi & Castle Tower	686,665	1,851,192	(2,900,000)
Science Skills Academy	158,274	157,274	(166,870)
Innovative Assisted Living	0	0	(196,977)
Inverness Castle	143,599	176,556	(221,091)
Affordable Housing	0	0	(312,000)
TOTAL	1,247,468	2,497,342	-4,441,620

(Note this figure relates to the spend on the ledger as of 31st March 2018. The spend since then is higher).

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Highland Council is the accountable body for the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal. It provides effective management arrangements for the City-Region Deal and assurance to both Governments that there is openness and transparency in governance, decision making and project delivery. A diagram of governance arrangements is shown below.

Central to the governance arrangements, a Programme Board has been established through which the lead officer/organisation for each specific project will report. The Programme Board comprises the lead officers for each project, a representative from the Finance Service and a representative from the business community and representatives from the Scottish and UK Governments. The Programme Board is chaired by The Highland Council's Director of Development and Infrastructure.

A Programme Manager has been appointed to undertake the following roles:

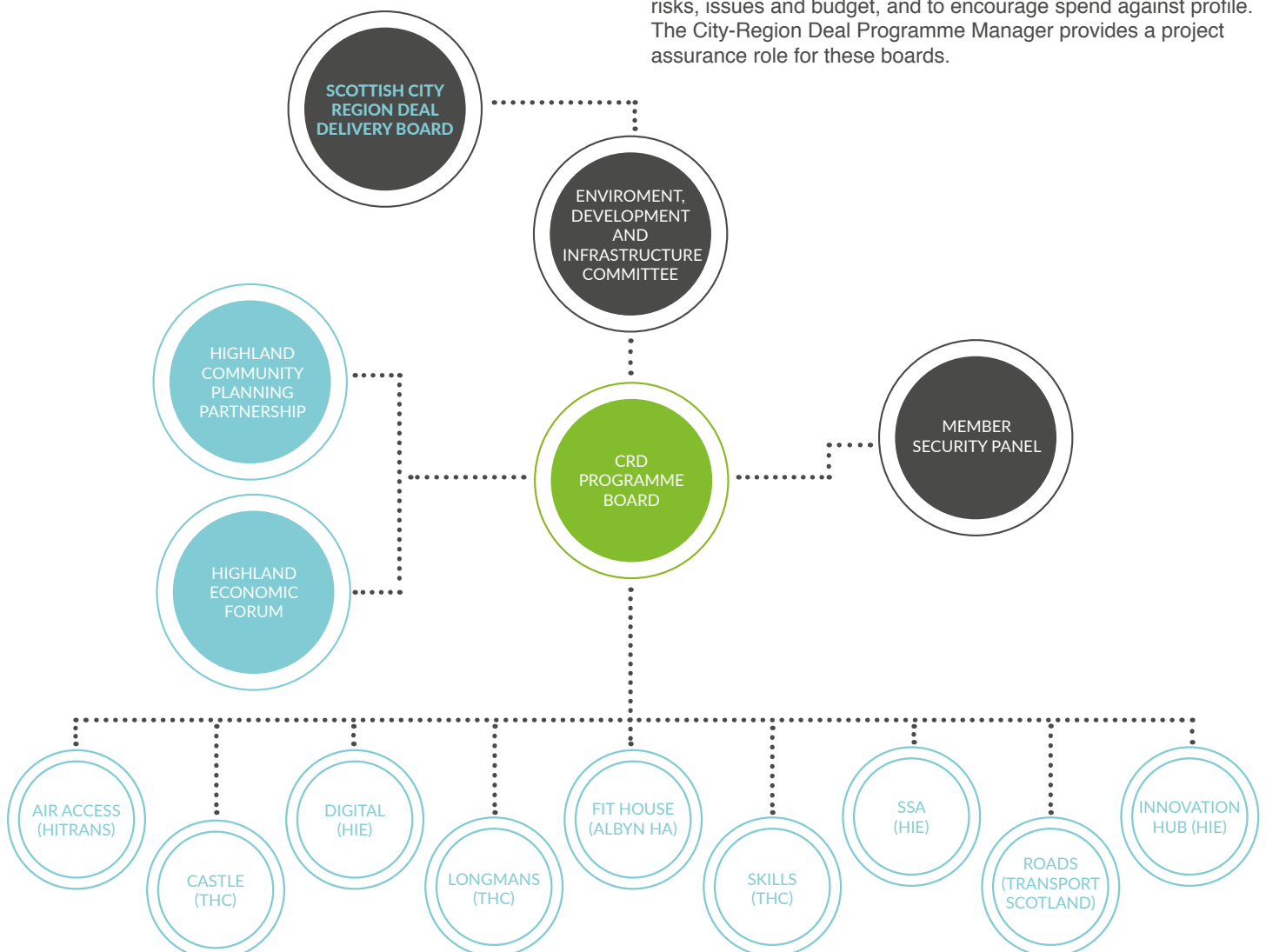
- first point of contact for Governments;
- ensuring effective co-ordination and liaison with project leads;
- monitoring and reporting progress to Programme Board; and
- preparation of reports.

At the project level each project within the City-Region Deal is required to have a project plan, a risk register and a benefits register:

- The plan is based on delivering against the business case, as agreed with both Governments, to allow scrutiny of the delivery of the project and to ensure fit for purpose deliverables are provided.
- The risk register is to allow an understanding of uncertainty around the projects, and to help identify mitigating actions. Related to this is the identification of issues where unanticipated events have already arisen, and what is need to mitigates these.
- It is too early for some projects to be recording any benefits, some are beginning to be identified. While few outcome measures have been created, benefits such as affordable houses being built, people moving in to the Fit homes and companies being supported by the Northern Innovation Hub are starting to be highlighted in the dashboard reports taken to the Programme Board.

What is yet to be produced is a performance dashboard report capturing the various benefits from individual projects in order to give a few about inclusive economic growth.

Each Project has a governing body/project board which the programme manager has access to or sits on. The role of these boards is to scrutinise progress and assist in the management of risks, issues and budget, and to encourage spend against profile. The City-Region Deal Programme Manager provides a project assurance role for these boards.



OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS AND PROGRESS

The following sections 7 to 18 give an overview of the component projects with highlights, key milestones and illustrations. To provide an overview of the programme the table below gives a view of progress for each of the component projects where UK or Scottish Government funding is provided.

For the purpose of this overview the projects are “RAG’ed” dependent on the need of remedial action or a change of approach. So whilst a project that is significantly below profiled spend this could be because the original profile was inaccurate or that there were problems that have since been resolved. Spend against cumulative grant is shown.

PROJECT	RAG	COMMENTARY
Inverness Castle	G	The Castle project is progressing well and is spending against profile. Much of this is to do with the significant level of design and options development and in addition the first quarter of 2018/19 will see a claim of £1.8 m including an amount for the purchase of bridge street.
View Point	G	This project has completed in terms of build. Visitor numbers are good and income is healthy.
Northern Innovation Hub	G	The Northern innovation Hub business case took significantly longer than expected to be approved however progress is now at pace and no change of approach is required.
UHI Centre for Health Innovation	G	Whilst there is an underspend in terms of claims; work is progressing well both for the capital and revenue aspects of this project. Delays in claims relate to Formal sign of with NHS.
Digital	R	Digital remains the most difficult of the Inverness and Highland City Region projects. To date none of the funding has been used due to the overlap with the R100. A Business case is being developed to use a proportion of funding for Fibre networks in the major settlements.
Wi-Fi	G	This project is nearing completion with a few remaining area with sites to be fully completed and measurement of use and benefit’s is underway.
Science Skills Academy	A	For this reporting period progress was satisfactory. The project is marked as amber due to the risk of delays in kitting out Netwon rooms for financial year 18/19. Actions are in hand to address these issues.
Fit House	A	There have been issues with this project in terms of delivery of houses. These have been resolved but delayed and there are ongoing issues with regards to acquisition of land which is a systemic issue shared with the affordable housing project.
Affordable housing	A	The current progress is satisfactory however the project is at risk die to the availability of land for houses. Future large scale developments will help this situation but the spend doing forward is at risk.
Longman Land Reclamation	A	This project is behind original profile which was set at too early a stage and consequently inaccurate The timescales for the project are inextricably tied to the development of the Longman interchange project and rely on permissions from SEPA.
Transport Infrastructure (Transport Scotland)	G	Based on the dashboard reports provided progress is satisfactory. These projects are of crucial importance to the overall deal as they interrelate to the Longman land reclamation project and the release of development land.
Transport Infrastructure HC	G	Phase 1 of the west link is complete and Phase 2 and the Inshes roundabout project are progressing as required.
Skills and Employability	A	Progress has been slow but a new approach is being developed based on a pilot in Fort William pilot aimed at more joined up working between organisations.
Air Access	G	This project has largely been overtaking by events. A watching brief and broad policy objective is sustaining air access and routes remains.

INVERNESS CASTLE

FUNDER: SCOT GOV

AMOUNT: £15M

PROJECT LEAD: GRAHAM WATSON



A key milestone, that has unlocked progress across the project, was the purchase of the Bridge Street site in June 2018. This followed a year of planning, developing the business case, and negotiating a deal with the vendor. Owning the Bridge Street site gives the project sufficient space to achieve its objectives, but also ensures that significant public support underpins the development.

Following this, progress has been quite rapid, with a site masterplan reviewed by the Project Delivery Group on the 7th September 2018. This will have major implications for the regeneration of this part of the centre of Inverness, so an initial public information exercise is planned for between now and Christmas. This will not be a consultation exercise, but a prelude to this, with further opportunities for engagement and discussion to follow.

This is, in part, because work has begun on affordability options for the Bridge Street site. The major visitor attraction element is on track as outlined in the City Deal, although the full scale of the ambition remains dependent on a successful lottery application. Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) has been asked to work on funding opportunities and finance raising for the Bridge Street site. It is the nature of the site, the attraction, and public expectations, that the project be taken forward as a whole, although phasing at a future stage is likely.

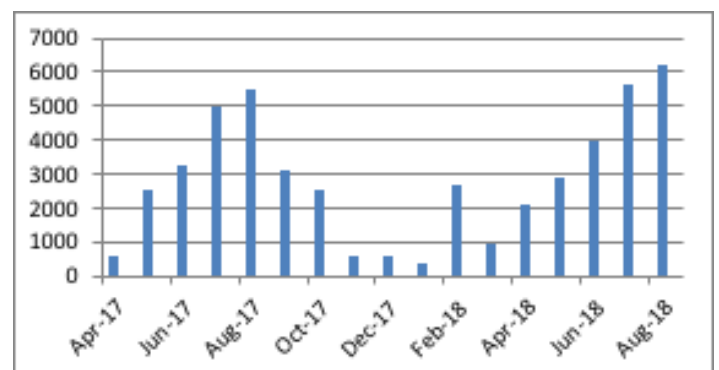
Further work has been done demonstrating the financial viability of a 'campus' based approach to the site. This will offer a mix of paid and free attractions, alongside significant catering and retail opportunities. Work is also progressing on a national partnership with museum and gallery organisations. It is likely that the final 'product' will be a mix of public and private sector provision.

Dependant on the work by SFT, the timetable of producing an initial business case based on the 'five case model', and the round one lottery application, will be ready for submission in spring 2019.

Using a part pf the original £3m capital funding the decision was taken to develop the North Tower of the Castle as visitor centre, This would serve to start the process of changing the use of the Castle to a visitor centre, make a statement about intent and provide a quick win that would help provide momentum to the City Region Deal. On the 11th of September The View point passed its 50, 000th visitor. Strong visitor numbers and healthy levels of income have been a feature since its opening.



TOWER VISITOR NUMBERS



NORTHERN INNOVATION HUB

FUNDER: UK GOV

AMOUNT: £11M

PROJECT LEAD: FELIX SPITAL



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 'n nan Eilean

BACKGROUND

The Northern Innovation Hub (NIH) builds on and accelerates current business innovation support services in the region, enabling an increased focus on sectoral opportunities which will build global competitive advantage. It is not a physical hub, instead it is a coherent grouping of projects designed to benefit small and emerging businesses.

The NIH Full Business Case (FBC) was approved by the UK Government in October 2017. Additional work is required for approval of the NIH Food and Drink projects, a revised FBC will be re-submitted to the UK Government in Autumn 2018.

HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS



KEY MILESTONES



APPROACH

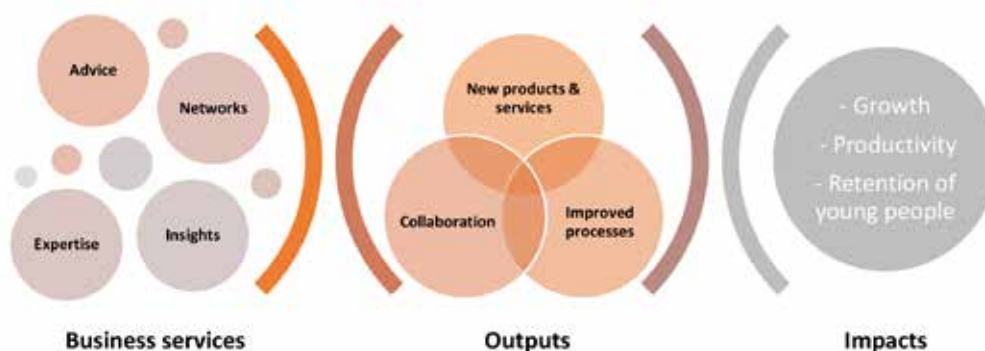




Photo credit: HIE

CASE STUDY

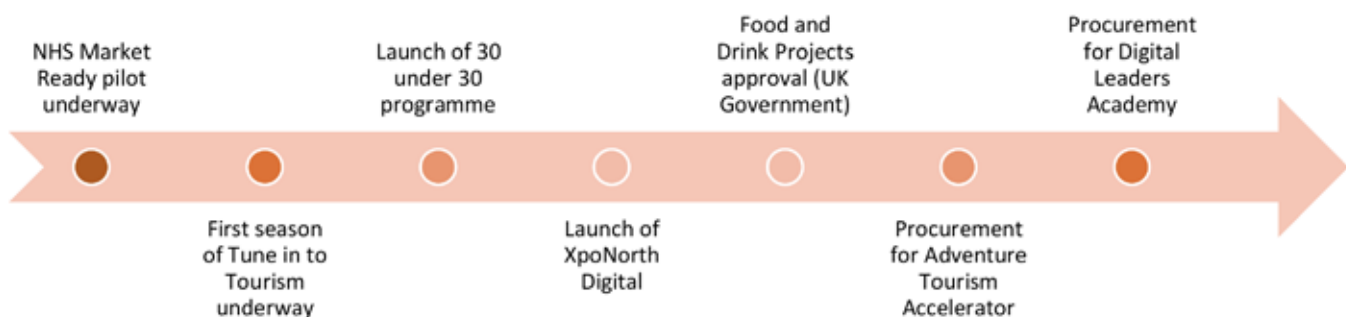
ANNA RENOUF

Owner and Director of Orrin Equestrian

Anna Renouf's business idea stemmed from her own experience of having to invest time and money to bring a horse back to health from injuries caused by an ill-fitting saddle. Anna identified a gap in the market and designed the first saddle which concentrated on the comfort and wellbeing of the horse as well as the rider. Through the NIH Pathfinder Accelerator programme, Anna has been given the opportunity to fast-track her business and help launch her product.

"As the weekly Pathfinder sessions progress, it really does cover every area for new and growing businesses, including important legal matters and company structures.

The tutors have advised us on company documentation – in particular, articles of association and shareholders' agreements – as well as intellectual property, trademark, copyright status and patents. We also looked at equity and sources of funding, and what kind of company documentation investors expect to see from a credible business."



HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

The Quadruple Innovation Helix

The project has firmly established our unique four-way partnership - the quadruple innovation helix - between academic, clinical, commercial and regional development actors. Our collective vision is to transform the regional economy, while delivering world-class healthcare throughout the Highlands and Islands.

- The partnership between NHS Highland and the university is rapidly evolving into a significant, meaningful asset for improving healthcare delivery.
- Links between researchers, clinicians and industry are more advanced than expected, with innovation opportunities developing rapidly in cardiology, orthopaedics, and diabetes. The commercialisation pipeline currently has over 50 ideas.
- The regional development partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise has created new co-investment opportunities for EU regional funding to expand the project's innovation infrastructure.
- Our open innovation model has attracted considerable interest from organisations throughout the UK who are seeking barrier-free approaches to university engagement.

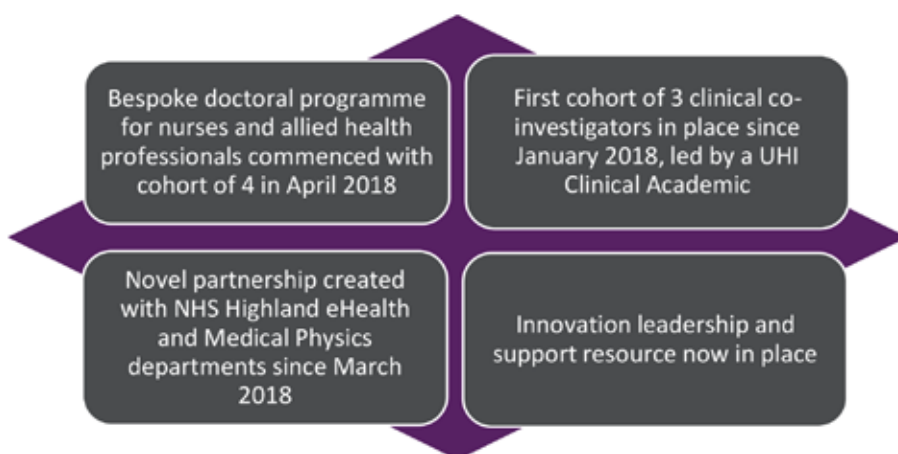
ACTIVE HEALTH

The active health theme has emerged as a unifying framework for numerous innovative research programmes in disease management, prevention, prehabilitation and rehabilitation, whilst stimulating a new approach to applied clinical-research partnerships and biomedical industry engagement. Opportunities to develop new products and services in cardiology, oncology, mental health, and primary care have been greatly assisted by this translational approach.

CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The capital infrastructure will both drive and facilitate these innovative collaborative approaches. Although delayed due to the need to align the building programme with the larger NHS Highland Elective Care Centre, the research programme is rapidly gaining momentum in advance of the new facility. The design process is approaching a readiness for the major planning application to be submitted in October 2018.

MILESTONES



CASE STUDY

Surgical instrument decontamination technology
The university has recently been awarded 'Campus Collaborate' funding to test and validate a novel surgical equipment decontamination technology developed by local SME, Aseptium. The one-year project, supported by the City-Region Deal, represents a new 3-way partnership between the university, Aseptium, and NHS Highland decontamination services.

This project will help address the significant global unmet need to mitigate ineffective and inefficient surgical equipment decontamination that contributes to hospital acquired infections, increased healthcare costs, and poor patient outcomes post-surgery. Our application emphasised the commercial, clinical, and academic benefits for each stakeholder, and was specifically commended by Highlands and Islands Enterprise for its strong collaboration, clear commercial outcomes, and potential global impact for patient health.



DIGITAL AND WI-FI

FUNDER: UK GOV

AMOUNT: £20M

PROJECT LEAD: STUART ROBERTSON



£20m capital funding is available for improving broadband connectivity across the Highland Council area to support our ambition to be the best digitally connected rural region in Europe.

There are a number of national initiatives currently underway to further these objectives but it is expected that these projects will not achieve the optimum outcomes for all parts of the region. This funding is therefore being used to complement and enhance the outputs from the major projects.

Following discussion with UK and Scottish City Deal teams, the current plan is that the majority of the funding (£17m) will be used in the Scottish Government's R100 project. The remainder will be used to undertake a phase 2 of the Local Full Fibre Network project to extend the scope to include additional Highland towns.

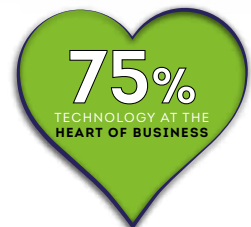
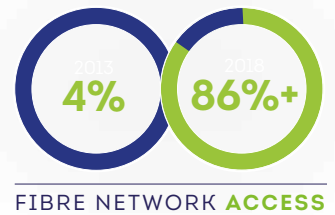
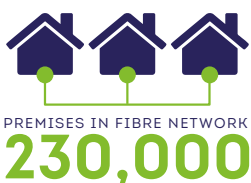
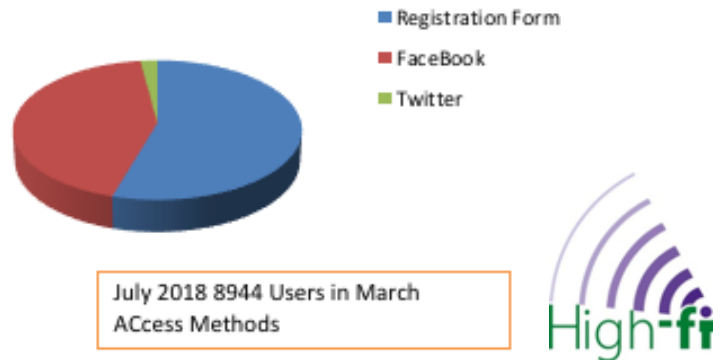
As both these projects are currently in procurement and the extent of their deliverables unknown, it is not yet clear exactly how the City Region funding can be used to achieve maximum outcomes and value for money. However, the over-riding objective will be to maximise availability of full fibre connections.

The indicative outcomes of the R100 procurement using its core funding will be known during the first half of 2019 and the extent of the gaps in coverage within the Highland area will become clear. It is proposed that the CRD funds will be added through a change request once the contract is signed. This will enable the work to proceed without need for another procurement.

The Highland Local Full Fibre Network project is underway and the build phase is planned for 2019. As soon as the scope of the build is finalised and contracts signed, detailed development can begin on a phase two. This would extend full fibre networks to and additional 8 local towns. These would be built during 2020.

The attached graphic shows the current levels of digital connectivity across the Highlands and Islands highlighting areas where improvement is required.

In addition to the £20 m City Region Deal funding £500, 000 of the original £3m tranche of money from the UK Government has been used to fund a Highland Wi-fi project. Starting and now established, in Inverness, this has been rolled out to another 14 settlements in the Highlands Under the HiFi Banner. The Inverness figures are extremely encouraging (Fig:1) and it is anticipated that the other settlement will enable the access to information particularly for the tourist market



SCIENCE SKILLS ACADEMY STEM

FUNDER: SCOT GOV

AMOUNT: £3M

PROJECT LEAD: ANDREW JOHNSTON

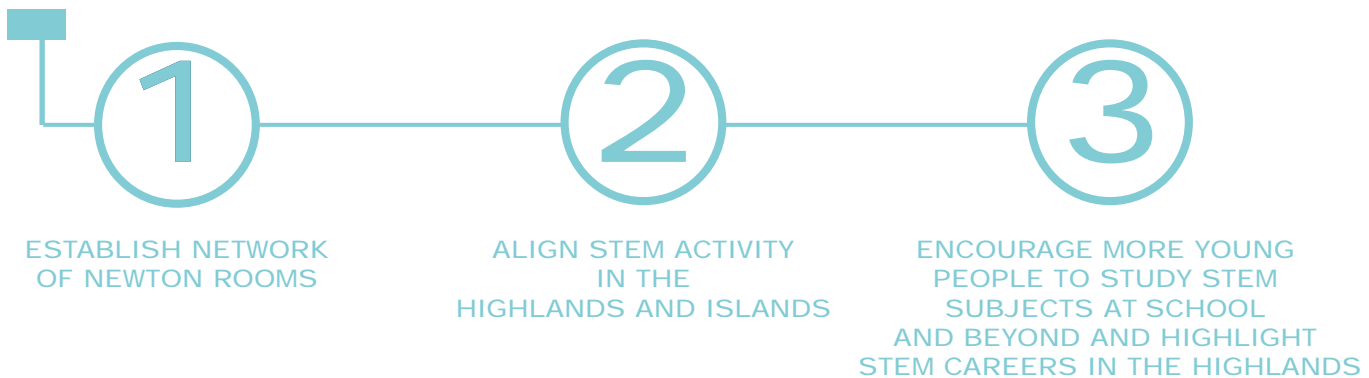


BACKGROUND

The Science Skills Academy (SSA) is a partnership project, led by Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

The mission of the SSA is to ensure young people in the Highlands are aware of the opportunities, and have the skills to enter into employment in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The SSA full business case was approved by the Scottish Government in January



HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY MILESTONES



Newton Rooms

Newton Rooms are inspirational learning spaces that work with schools, employers and communities to provide memorable STEM learning experiences for young people. The Newton which concept was developed by FIRST Scandinavia, has over fifteen years' experience of establishing more than 40 Newton rooms throughout remote and rural Norway.

- Partnership agreement signed with FIRST Scandinavia, January 2018
- Sites for first Newton Rooms (Caithness, Lochaber) identified and local steering groups established
- Project managers for first Newton Rooms appointed and architectural drawings completed.
- Submission of building warrant applications imminent
- Options appraisal for further Newton Rooms underway (Ross-shire, Skye, Inverness)
- Key learning areas (modules) identified and development group established. First module (robotics and mathematics)

ALIGNMENT



A key role of the SSA is to align the variety of STEM activities available to young people in Highland from a disparate range of providers to maximise complementarity, minimize duplication and provide best strategic fit with the Scottish Government's STEM strategy.

- Geographical Information System established. The SSA currently collates all STEM activity that is delivered by the University of the Highlands and Islands STEM Team, SDS's My World of Work Live as well as SSA activity. The GIS highlights which schools across the region are participating in STEM activity, encourages synergy between different STEM deliverers, and avoids of repetition of activities.
- Highland STEM futures day convened to begin mapping STEM provision, with an extensive range of Highland STEM providers and national agencies represented
- Highland STEM strategy group established to closely align partners' efforts with the national STEM strategy
- Highland STEM operations forum established to maximise the reach and effectiveness of STEM programmes in Highland



Photo credit: Alison White/HIE

CASE STUDY

To test out the Newton model, workshops on both health and health science were delivered to P6 pupils in Wick, Inverness and Fort William and to S2 pupils from Ullapool High School.

The P6 pupils worked on hearts, lungs and first aid with junior doctors and medical students from NHS Highland and Dundee University. The S2 pupils from Ullapool worked on exercise science, exhaled gas composition and built their own heart rate monitors with staff from the University of the Highlands and Islands and Skills Development Scotland.

'Great feedback from a couple of parents (teachers in school) and the pupils. Really enjoyed the day and the fact that there was no hanging about between sessions, it was all go. Thanks very much for arranging this' (Ullapool High School teacher comment) I just wanted to let you know how much the children all got out of it and how much learning was achieved that morning. It was very practical and hands on. Using medical students was brilliant as the children related well to the younger adults (Raigmore Primary School teacher comment)

NEXT STEPS



OPEN
NEWTON
ROOMS
LOCHABER
CAITHNESS



DEVELOP
MODULES:
MARINE/LIFE/
HEALTH
SCIENCE AND
LAND USE



OPEN
NEWTON
ROOMS
ROSS-SHIRE
SKYE
INVERNESS



PROMOTE TO
SCHOOLS
BUSINESSES
AND
COMMUNITIES

PROJECT UPDATE

The pilot Fit Homes development in Alness was completed April 2018 and fifteen of the properties are now occupied. Initial consultation has been conducted with each of the tenants about the design and the technology, with positive feedback in particular about the accessibility, space and feel of the homes, the level of thought that has gone into meeting their specific needs and positivity about being part of a co-development process to develop technology for the future.

Significant progress has been made on the technology development, which is already attracting wider interest and opportunities. A prototype monitoring system was designed, tested and has been installed in all of these pilot homes. The system is working successfully and should provide the core infrastructure to build on in each of the cluster test beds.

Interpreted personalised data from the sensors can be viewed by tenants and their permitted carers or relatives. Anonymous data is being used by researchers at Robert Gordon University to develop a prototype model of predicting increased risk of falls. Initial results have been positive, particularly around the detail of behaviours at home that can be inferred from the installed system with minimum intrusion.

City-Region Deal investment in the project has already helped attract additional funding to build on this work from The Data Lab and Social Innovation Fund. Funding from the Data Lab will support a PhD student to build on the predictive analytics work being undertaken by Robert Gordon University, particularly around the implications of retro-fitting the system in other house types and layouts and how the model can be applied to predict risk of other health conditions. We are also in discussion with two further potential funders to work with Abertay University and the University of Glasgow on taking development of our user interface to the next level and having a stake in emerging sensor technology.



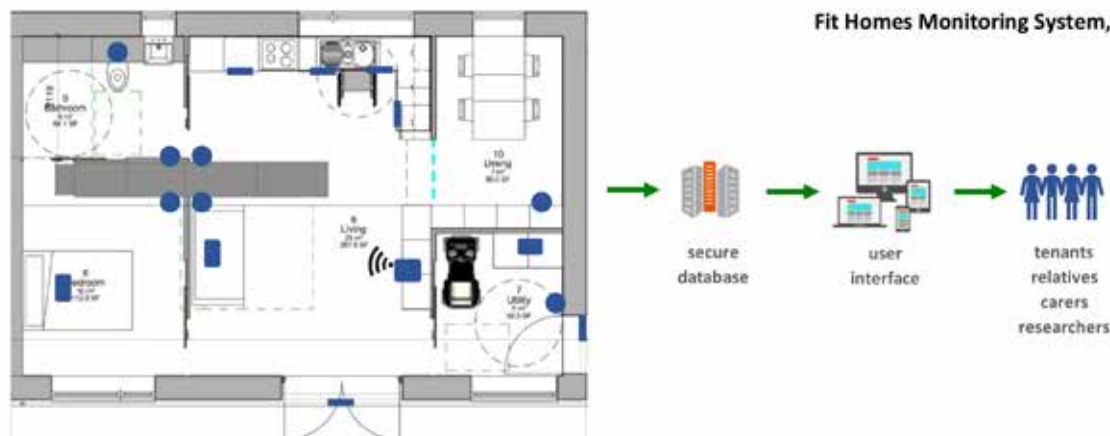
Significant wider interest has emerged around the technology we are developing and we are already exploring next stage projects where we could test out the approach with interested organisations in wider Scotland, England and internationally. We are encouraged by the opportunity this interest could provide to develop our commercial products in collaboration with our potential market.

We have purchased a site for the first CRD funded build in Nairn and are nearing completion of some of the site specific design and planning issues. We have identified an optimum site in Inverness for the second CRD funded build, intended for veterans, and are negotiating its purchase. A number of rural communities across the Highlands have expressed interest in being the location for the remaining CRD funded build, and NHS Highland have also identified some priority areas, all of which are being assessed.

Completion of the pilot homes has provided significant learning experience to build on in the City-Region Deal funded new builds, particularly around project management arrangements, risk associated with innovation, the allocations process, the co-ordination of care packages and telecare, affordability and development of the monitoring system.

CASE STUDIES

Albyn is working on short video case studies, the first of which is available at the following link using the password 'Albyn':
<https://vimeo.com/284991691>



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

FUNDER: SCOT GOV

AMOUNT: £5M

PROJECT LEAD: ALLAN MAGUIRE

HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

The project purpose is to offer young people attractive, affordable housing in the Highlands to enable them to stay in the region, retaining a young, vibrant workforce for the Highlands. The vision for the project is to deliver high quality housing for young people in the Highlands, initially for rent at affordable levels but with an opportunity to purchase, should they wish to do so enabling young people to remain the area, rather than migrating to other areas of Scotland. The target is to deliver an average of 75 new affordable houses per annum over a ten year period. The first projects are due for completion in October 2018 in Inverness and Drumradrochit with other projects planned throughout the Highlands. The funding model is based on upon a mixture of City Region deal funding, Highland Council prudential borrowing, Highland Council land bank funding and Scottish Government Affordable Housing Investment Programme(AHIP).

KEY MILESTONES

We have received approval for projects in Inverness, Drumradrochit Fort William Ullapool and Munloch. The first units will be complete in September 2018 at Raining's Stairs Inverness. We are progressing with further sites in Granton, Aviemore, Dunain Bridge, Carrbridge, Inverness, Dingwall, and Alness in 2018/19. The total number of units for approval in 2018/19 is 95 new homes.

CASE STUDY

Raining's Stairs Inverness

The Raining's Stairs development is in the centre of the city directly opposite Inverness Castle. The development will reinvigorate this important part of Inverness; replacing a long-vacant 'problem' site with a building of significant architectural quality and profound, transformational benefits to the community. Not only is this project delivering much needed affordable homes targeted to young people, but will regenerate an area well known for anti- social behaviour and provide a enhanced access route to the proposed new castle visitor attraction project. The building comprises 16 affordable housing units (10 funded partly through City Region Deal) and a small commercial unit. It is due to be complete in October 2018.

PROJECT UPDATE

Full list of current projects shown below

CITY DEAL 2017/18 PROJECTS			
	UNITS	GRANT	DEVELOPER
Glendoe Terrace	10	60000	HHA
Raining's Stairs	10	60000	HHA
Drumradrochit	5	30000	HHA
Balvonie	9	54000	ALBYN
Ullapool	6	36000	HHA
Lochyside	6	36000	HHA
Balloan Road	6	36000	HHA
TOTALS	52	312000	

2018/19 PROJECTS			
	UNITS	GRANT	DEVELOPER
Munloch	6	36000	HHA
Grantown on Spey	8	48000	HHA
Dunain Bridge	10	60000	HHA
Carrbridge	7	42000	HHA
Academy Street	17	102000	HHA
Slackbuie	15	90000	HHA
Croy	6	36000	HHA
Alness Dalmore	8	48000	Albyn
Aviemore Burnside	4	24000	Albyn
Newtonmore	4	24000	Albyn
Inverness Stratton	8	48000	Albyn
Inverness Ness Side	2	12000	Albyn
	95	570000	



LONGMAN LAND RECLAMATION

FUNDER: UK GOV

AMOUNT: £10M

PROJECT LEAD: ALLAN MAGUIRE



HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

The project objective is to carry out remediation and site servicing works to release a strategic site to the market to create 18 hectares of development-ready land for light industry/commercial use.

This will address lack of availability of appropriate land to meet the needs of both small and medium size businesses and the needs of larger inward investment companies. Encouraging employment uses to ensure the continued economic growth and success of Inverness.

In order to achieve the above we need to provide SEPA with a detailed remediation plan which will enable them to consider a partial release of the landfill licence categorisation. A business case for site investigation work was approved and the Highland Council carried out site investigation works to consider and report on landfill stability/ settlement, landfill leachate and landfill gas. This required one year gas monitoring, monitoring of ground water tidal effect, ecology study and standard penetration tests. This will enable the Council to prepare a strategy document for a landfill surrender application and provide detailed estimated of the remediation work required to deliver significant business and industrial land supply for the next 10 years in Inverness.

The initial contract for intrusive site investigation works to fully assess the levels of contamination and remediation works required, has been carried out and discussed with SEPA. Further site investigation works have been identified and are currently being carried for a further report to be submitted to SEPA in January 2019 hopefully getting an in principle agreement by March 2019.

The timescales for the project are intrinsically tied into the proposed new interchange at the longman roundabout as the site cannot be developed and let until the new interchange is built. The Highland Council is working closely with Transport Scotland to co-ordinate activities and share information in relation to the longman interchange proposals.

KEY MILESTONES

SUBMISSION OF FULL SITE INVESTIGATION REPORT TO SEPA: JANUARY 2019

SEPA IN PRINCIPLE APPROVAL: MARCH 2019

FURTHER SITE INVESTIGATIONS FOR FULL BUSINESS CASE: SEPTEMBER 2019

FULL BUSINESS CASE SUBMITTED FOR REMEDIATION WORKS: OCTOBER 2019

REMEDiation WORKS COMMENCE: APRIL 2020

SITE SERVICING WORKS COMMENCE: APRIL 2022

SITE MARKETED: APRIL 2024 (SUBJECT TO COMPLETION OF LONGMAN INTERCHANGE)

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

A9/A96 INSHES TO SMITHTON LINK ROAD

FUNDER: SCOT GOV AMOUNT: £109 M (FOR BOTH PROJECTS) PROJECT LEAD: DAVID TORRANCE

As part of the Scottish Government's commitment within the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal, Transport Scotland is taking forward plans for a single carriageway road connecting Inshes and Smithton.

The project is being delivered by Transport Scotland and is subject to Transport Scotland's governance requirements. Funding of the project is a matter for Scottish Ministers hence a budget profile is not required.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Transport Scotland carries out a rigorous assessment process to establish the preferred option for a road project. The assessment process, based on standards and best practice set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), covers environment, engineering, traffic and economics. Throughout this process Transport Scotland consults with a large number of people.

- Public Exhibitions were held on 23 and 24 August 2016 to give the public the opportunity to comment on the developing route options for the scheme.
- The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 route options assessment work was completed in October 2017.
- The Preferred Option (Option 3, with two variants) was presented at Public Exhibitions held between 31 October and 1 November 2017.
- Further public events held on 16 and 17 May 2018 to present updated proposals for comment, including provision for cyclists and pedestrians and the preferred route option (Variant B).
- Preliminary Ground Investigation work completed in May 2018 will help inform the on-going design and assessment work for the new link road.

The preferred option will include new junctions at Ashton Farm and Cradlehall, a new link to the Inverness Retail and Business Park and a bridge over the Highland Main Line railway. Additional lanes will also be added across the A9 at Culloden Road, providing two lanes of traffic in either direction, along with an additional lane on the A9 southbound between Raigmore Interchange and Inshes Junction to assist merging and diverging traffic.

FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE TRANSPORT SCOTLAND WEBSITE

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/public-drop-in-session-materials-may-2018-a9a96-inshes-to-smithton/>

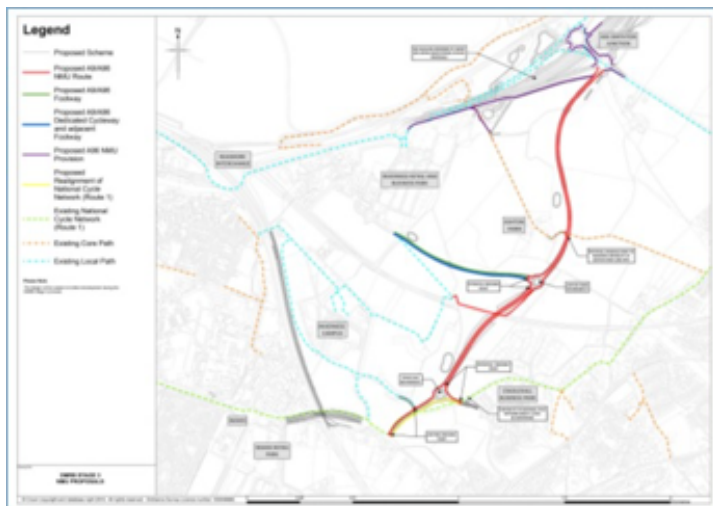


NEXT STEPS

While there is still a lot of essential development work to be carried out Transport Scotland continues to push forward the preparation stages to deliver this scheme as soon as possible.

- On-going development and assessment of the preferred option (DMRB Stage 3 Assessment) culminating with the publication of draft Orders and Environmental Impact Assessment Report in 2019 for formal comment.
- Following publication of draft Orders further progress will be dependent on the public reaction to the published draft Orders and whether a public local inquiry is required.
- Delivery of the scheme itself can only commence if the scheme is approved under these procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be determined.
- Construction timescales expected to be around 18 to 24 months.

The A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton Link Road scheme is located to the East of Inverness and will enable a significant area of development land. The scheme is interdependent with Inshes Phase 2 road scheme which is being progressed by The Highland Council and the programme of both schemes will require to be aligned. Transport Scotland has been working closely and collaboratively with The Highland Council throughout the development of the scheme and will continue to do so.



TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

A9/A82 LONGMAN JUNCTION IMPROVEMENT

FUNDER: SCOT GOV

AMOUNT: £109 M (FOR BOTH PROJECTS)

PROJECT LEAD: DAVID TORRANCE

As part of the Scottish Government's commitment within the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal, Transport Scotland is taking forward plans for the grade separation of the A9/A82 Longman Roundabout.

The project is being delivered by Transport Scotland and is subject to Transport Scotland's governance requirements. Funding of the project is a matter for Scottish Ministers hence a budget profile is not required.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Transport Scotland carries out a rigorous assessment process to establish the preferred option for a trunk road project, like the improvements to Longman. The assessment process, based on standards and best practice set by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), covers environment, engineering, traffic and economics. Throughout this process Transport Scotland consults with a large number of people. Building on the work being progressed on the A9/A96 Inshes to Smithton Link Road, design work on the grade separation of the A9/A82 Longman Roundabout is progressing well.

- Transport Scotland appointed a consultant on 30 August 2017 to take forward the design and assessment of the scheme.
- Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (DMRB) Stage 2 option assessment well underway.
- Public Exhibitions held 29 and 30 May 2018 to let the local community and road users view and comment on the options under consideration.
- Preliminary Ground Investigation site works commenced September 2018 which will help inform the on-going options assessment process.

FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE TRANSPORT SCOTLAND WEBSITE

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/exhibition-materials-public-exhibitions-may-2018-a9a82-longman-junction-improvement-scheme/>



NEXT STEPS

While there is still a lot of essential development work to be carried out Transport Scotland continues to push forward the preparation stages to deliver this scheme as soon as possible.

- DMRB Stage 2 option assessment process expected to identify preferred option early 2019.
- Detailed development and assessment of the preferred option (DMRB Stage 3 Assessment) will follow and is expected to take approximately 18 months to complete.
- Publication of draft Orders and Environmental Impact Assessment Report expected 2020 for formal comment.
- Following publication of draft Orders further progress will be dependent on the public reaction to the published draft Orders and whether a public local inquiry is required.
- Delivery of the scheme itself can only commence if the scheme is approved under these procedures and thereafter a timetable for progress can be determined.
- Construction timescales dependent upon preferred option but expected to be around 18 to 24 months?

Transport Scotland will continue to work in collaboration with The Highland Council during the development and assessment of the scheme. Transport Scotland will also continue discussions with The Highland Council regarding potential development around the Longman area which may come forward in advance of major junction improvements.



WESTLINK AND INSHES

FUNDER: **HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

AMOUNT: **64.3M**

PROJECT LEAD: **COLIN HOWELL**



WESTLINK

The most significant of the partner projects to the City Region Deal are the West Link Stages 1 and 2 and The Inshes Roundabout. These with associated sports developments represent more than half of the other contributions to the City Region Deal.

The West Link Stage 1 was officially opened on the 11th December 2017.

This West Link Project will

- allow the peripheral growth of Inverness
- reduce traffic congestion in Inverness City centre;
- reduce existing canal bridge delays and waiting times
- with associated cycle tracks and footpaths - expand the active travel network removing bottlenecks and barriers to cycling and walking
- Improved connectivity to the south and west of Inverness will release land for development identified in the local plan.

Stage 2 (additional swing bridge) design and contract preparation is ongoing for construction following the relocation of the golf course and is programmed to commence in Spring 2019.

Adverts have been placed for interested contractors. Planning submissions have been made to seek the necessary consents. It was also agreed at this committee to develop holes 5 to 8 of the old golf course as a city park, subject to securing appropriate funding.



Torvean Golf Course - Works are ongoing on the clubhouse and maintenance building and are progressing well with completion scheduled in May, but efforts are ongoing to finish earlier. Any delay to the clubhouse can be accommodated by maintaining existing facilities during the Stage 2 construction works until the new facilities are available for occupation.

INSHES ROUNDABOUT

The Minister for Transport and the Islands announced the preferred route for the East Link in October 2017, and public exhibitions were held at that time attended by officers of the Council.

Integration between the design and traffic models between Transport Scotland (TS) and Highland Council is ongoing – TS have funded additional traffic surveys by automatic traffic counters and junction traffic counts. This information will be used to further validate the base traffic model allowing greater refinement and certainty in traffic modelling and design development to maximise benefits. The traffic model outputs are anticipated soon.

Consultations are ongoing with representatives of Culcabock and Drakies Community Council in respect of access to Drakies and also the developer of Dell of Inshes, to consider issues and options.

Design work is ongoing for early delivery of a new access to the Police Scotland Station that will give flexibility for construction of the main Inshes Junction when the optimum layout has been established.

The Inverness / Highland City Region Deal has established the Highland Air Access Group to work on and promote:

1. Connectivity of the region should recognise not just direct destination links with the region but is also a capacity, frequency and onward connections at destination airports;
2. Reduce entry barriers for new routes;
3. Partner with airlines and airports on route development;
4. Stimulate demand through effective brand development;
5. Ensure State Aid rules are fully understood;
6. Ensure aviation facilities are fit to purpose;
7. More conscious partnering with air linked economies;
8. Work to ensure that any connectivity benefit is spread more widely across the region;
9. Work to ensure that the direct, indirect, induced and catalytic benefits of aviation are optimised;

The recent focus of the partners' air access activities include:

- The development of best value options for the re-introduction of air services to Ashaig Aerodrome on the Isle of Skye
- Developing the case for the Highlands and Islands exemption to be built into and expanded on in any new Air Departure Tax arrangements developed through the Scotland Act powers.
- Seeking engagement with the Department for Transport on the development of the UK Aviation Strategy to ensure the region's voice is heard in the development of that important policy document.
- Making the case for extension of the Air Discount Scheme for business use and student travel.

CONTEXT

The Inverness and Highland Region City Region Deal when prepared and entered into, recognised the challenges in delivering skills and training across the region and acknowledged that the current approach adopted did not always serve businesses and individuals to best effect. To this end the Deal committed the Council together with the UK and Scottish Governments, to bring forward pilot innovatives and new approaches to the delivery of skills and training.

Since the City Region Deal was agreed, momentum has progressed across Scotland to ensure that inclusive growth is central to economic development. In addition, following the Scottish Government's Enterprise and Skills Review and the view taken that national economic growth needs strong regional economies, the (re) emergence of regional partnerships addressing regional needs is considered as a complementary drive for and means by which inclusive growth can be achieved. Early in 2018 the Highland Economic Forum reviewed and refocused itself to fulfil this regional partnership function.

A core economic challenge identified by the Economic Forum is that Highland is projected to have a significant drop in its working age population, with the result that it will have insufficient skilled labour. This will impact to differing degrees across sectors and across the various parts of Highland. While parallel actions are underway in connection with talent attraction and retention/'grow your own', a straightforward challenge exists to ensure as many of the resident population who are able and willing to work, are in employment.

With high employment rates already in existence, this presents particular challenges and indicates that the targeted client group(s) will be individuals who experience specific barriers which stop them from looking for and accessing work. Best practice suggests such individuals will, in response to their individual needs, require sustained support and services which are multi-faceted.

Where these people live, be it urban, rural or remote rural, matters in Highland and directly impacts on the service delivery challenges involved. It also impacts on job availability and an individual's ability to travel to education, training or work.

Hence this skilled labour and inclusive growth challenge complements and reinforces the need to identify and secure solutions to the operational challenges presented when seeking to successfully deliver skills and training in Highland.

ACTION

To initiate this work The Highland Council commissioned an independent assessment of current employability services arrangements and asked, through consultation with all key partners and best practice, that proposals be prepared on how best the City Region Deal can tackle this challenge. This work was undertaken by Rocket Science.

The Highland Council has used this report, and the core recommendation that there is a need for a Highland whole system approach, as the basis of two propositions going forward. The first offered a Highland Community Planning Partnership approach to the delivery of the now named Fair Start Scotland programme and the second was a bid to the Scottish Government's Innovation and Integration Challenge Fund. Neither found favour with the Scottish Government.

To progress matters, following discussions with Scottish Government officials, a draft concept proposal has been prepared and submitted to the Council's contact officer in Employability team at Scottish Government. It is intended that this concept proposal will be discussed before it is further developed with partners and formalised. The recently launched Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth diagnostic toolkit will be utilised to evidence the proposal

ADDITIONALITY

City Region Deals should be seen as more than a collection of projects, they can also act as a catalyst for further developments and opportunities, create synergies through collaboration and support related developments around “place making”. Examples of this for the City Region Deal are shown below. This aspect of providing additionality through the Inverness and Highland City Region Deal in particular has drawn praise from Government Colleagues, and in future reports for all City Region and Growth Deals will need to provide information on additionality.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT ON ARISING FROM THE CITY REGION DEAL

Whilst the City Region Deal Digital spend is curtailed by the planning for R100 (the Scottish Government Initiative). The planning and development work associated with this meant that the Highland Council and partners have been well placed to seize the opportunity to bid for funding from the Local Full Fibre Network Challenge Fund. The grant of £4.2 million from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, will allow the creation of full fibre networks in Inverness, Fort William, Wick and Thurso and will be paid over and above the original £20 million. The networks fit with the City Region Deal’s objective of making the Highland Council area the most digitally connected rural region in Europe.

The Inverness Castle project began with the opportunity created by the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service moving from the existing Castle. The original plan to redevelop the Castle has rightly been expanded to consider the whole of the Castle Hill and what can be done to develop the iconic site within Inverness and the Highlands. This led to the purchase of Bridge Street and the potential to attract further private sector investment to create a truly world class visitor experience on Castle Hill.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The UHI Centre for Health Innovation, the FIT House and the Northern Innovation Hub are all pan - Highland projects aimed at delivering services and economic development. Each is innovative and capable of creating new models of work and markets and, as such, have been able to attract or are in the process of requesting, European and other funding to further develop their project. If all monies are received this would represent at least an additional £5 million to be spent in the Highlands.

SUPPORTING RELATED DEVELOPMENTS AROUND - PLACE MAKING

The Newton Room, digital, mid-market rental housing, and employability and skills work are City Region Deal projects which will be developed in Fort William at the same time as the exciting developments around the Liberty alloy wheel plant in Fort William. These projects therefore support the development of place making and regeneration in an area, and are strategically important area of developments for the Highlands. The Newton room in Caithness and forthcoming digital network and work will play a similar role in developing the economy and communities in Caithness. This model can be replicated throughout the Highlands.

Another example of place making, albeit on a smaller scale, relates to an affordable housing mid-market rent project. The Raining’s Stairs housing project in Inverness has created a number of mid-market rentable units to help young people with the right skills to remain in the Highlands. It has redeveloped a brownfield unusable piece of land as an asset to the area and has been recognised by Inside Housing winning the award for Best Residential Development (Under 70 Homes) in the UK in 2018.

CONTACTS

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City-Region Deal
Cùmhnant Baile-Roinne