



SCOT VANCE CONTRACTORS

Civils & Utilities

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to offer my full support for HI-Skills and its proposal to establish the National Infrastructure Skills Centre in Inverness at Torvean Quarry.

My business operates across the south Highlands within the civils and energy sectors, working as a key subcontractor to Scottish and Southern Energy. Like many businesses in the Highlands, we face a persistent challenge in accessing a workforce that is fully prepared for the demands of modern infrastructure delivery.

While there are existing training routes available, they do not always cover the specialisms or reflect the realities of site-based work or the pace and complexity of projects being delivered across the region. As a result, employers are often required to invest significant additional time and resource to bridge the gap between qualification and true job readiness.

This is not only a business issue, it is a personal one. My son Liam has recently completed the Construction Operations NPA at UHI Fort William. While it provided a very basic introduction, it did not create a clear or direct pathway into the specialist roles our industry requires. As a result, he has now had to travel to the National Construction College in Norfolk to begin his apprenticeship in plant operations.

That change, from a local classroom-based course to travelling on a round trip of 900+ miles for practical apprenticeship training, highlights a disconnect in the current system. For young people in the Highlands or indeed Scotland, there is no coherent, locally accessible route from early-stage training into skilled employment in infrastructure. Instead, they are forced to leave the region to progress, taking talent, time, and opportunity with them.

The HI-Skills model for a National Infrastructure Skills Centre represents a fundamental shift. A facility designed around real-world environments, shaped by industry, and delivered at scale within the Highlands would provide a level of relevance, excellence and accessibility that is currently missing. It would allow learners to develop practical competence from day one, while enabling businesses to engage more directly in shaping the skills pipeline.

Our company is committed to training and developing our workforce, but this cannot be achieved in isolation. A collaborative approach, bringing together industry, CITB and public sector partners is essential if we are to meet the demands of the infrastructure pipeline ahead. HI-Skills provides that platform, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to its development, particularly in ensuring that training content reflects our real operational needs.

I also strongly support the community asset transfer of Torvean Quarry. A site of this scale is critical to delivering meaningful, practical training that mirrors real working conditions. Its redevelopment would bring long-overdue purpose to the site, creating lasting value for industry, the workforce, and the wider Highland community.

This is a significant opportunity to strengthen the region's skills base, retain talent, and ensure the Highlands and Islands are equipped to deliver the infrastructure and energy projects that Scotland depends on.

Yours Sincerely,

Scot Vance

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