

# Press release: UK's £2 million tourism fund working for the Highlands

A £2 million tourism fund created by the UK Government is helping to attract more international visitors and increased spending into Inverness and Loch Ness.

The First Secretary of State Damian Green hosted a GREAT Inverness Loch Ness tourism reception in Inverness to celebrate the success of the venture and thank local businesses for their contributions.

The Minister also met with the Highland Council to discuss the progress of the Inverness and Highland City Region deal. The UK Government is investing almost £1 billion in Scottish City Deals, which aim to benefit businesses and communities across Scotland. The Inverness deal was agreed in January this year and is worth more than £300m in total. Mr Green met with Council Convener Bill Lobban and Council Leader Margaret Davidson in Inverness today.

Through the GREAT campaign the UK is directly spending £2 million over the next four years, promoting tourism in Inverness and the Highlands.

There were over 340,000 international visitors to Inverness last year, bringing with them over £115 million in additional spending. This is an increase of 46% since 2015.

First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office Damian Green said:

It's great to see how the UK Government's investment is helping boost the numbers of tourists to Inverness and Loch Ness and deliver economic benefits for local people and businesses.

This whole region is steeped in history and surrounded by breath-taking scenery, offering our international visitors a truly spectacular and memorable experience.

I was very pleased to hear that the Inverness and Highland City Region deal is making a real difference in areas like tourism and digital connectivity. Its success reflects the UK Government's commitment to spreading economic growth to all parts of the United Kingdom.

VisitBritain Director Patricia Yates said:

The legend of Nessie is a fantastic springboard to promote the stunning landscapes, activities and experiences that you can only have on a trip to Inverness and Loch Ness.

We want to inspire visitors to book a trip right now to come and explore this part of the Highlands, spreading the economic benefits of tourism outside the peak holiday periods.

The GREAT Campaign showcases the very best of what our nation has to offer, encouraging the world to visit. Key to the success of the GREAT Inverness Loch Ness campaign has most recently been targeted activity at France, Germany and the Netherlands, with the tagline – “Come hunting for Nessie, stay for the experience.” The campaign aims to deliver an additional £21.6 million in incremental spend and to sustain 400 local tourism jobs.