

10. BENEFITS TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL ECONOMIES

Tourism

The Moray Growth Deal, currently being considered by the UK government, aims to transform the cultural offering in Moray for locals and visitors³⁶. The vision is:

“The overall vision for the Moray Growth Deal has been summarised as Innovation from Tradition. It is felt that this characterises Moray throughout its history, with the continued dominance of the whisky industry arguably being the best example of this.”

It aims to achieve this by addressing the following issues:

“During the first half of 2017 tourism added almost £60 million to our local economy. There is no doubt that visitor numbers are increasing but to maintain this we need world class attractions and facilities. The lack of hotel accommodation results in visitors staying elsewhere and spending their money outside the region. The plan for the Cultural Quarter addresses many of the barriers to increased visitor numbers and increased tourism spend in the area.”

The creation of a Cultural Quarter in Elgin will:

- Showcase the strength of Moray’s offering in food, drink and textiles, with a focus on a ‘Whisky Experience’. It will host video and interactive exhibits, and tastings, as well as signposting visitors to tours and visitor centres across Moray and the North of Scotland.
- A refurbished Town Hall housing Moray College Creative Industries Hub, a multi-purpose theatre and performance space with rehearsal rooms and a gallery space
- 4/5-star hotel (to be privately funded)

The Scotch whisky industry³⁷ is associated with around 40,000 jobs in the UK, including 7,000 jobs in less accessible areas. In Moray there are 50 whisky distilleries in Speyside, the largest concentration in Scotland. According to Karen Betts, chief executive of the Scotch Whisky Association, “Last year, Scotch whisky distilleries achieved a record 1.7m visits, up almost eight per cent on 2015 and people are spending more than before, often to take a taste of Scotland home with them.”³⁸

³⁶ <http://www.mymoray.co.uk/moray-growth-deal-transform-cultural-offering-locals-visitors/>

³⁷ Scotch Whisky Association, January 2017, “*The Economic Impact of Scotch Whisky Production in the UK (25/1/17)*”

³⁸ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/852368/scotland-whisky-distilleries-numbers-record>