

Castle Viewpoint

A project of the City-Region Deal

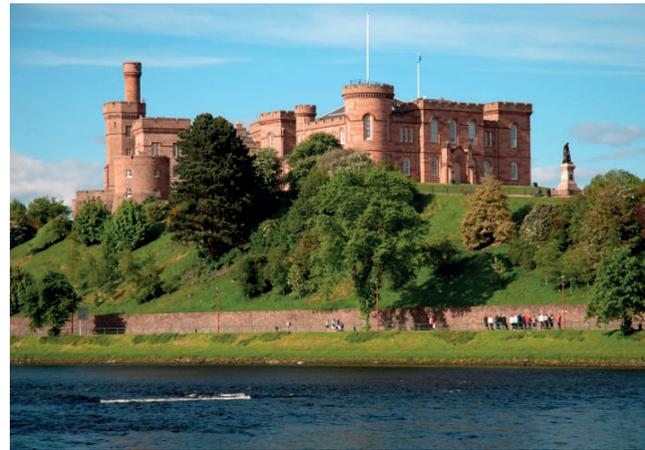


Introduction

Inverness Castle including the North Tower sits on a prominent, elevated site at the heart of the City and is one of its main focal attractions. The conversion of the North Tower into a visitor attraction is an exciting opportunity to help open up the castle's tourism potential and complements proposals for the wider castle. The castle site attracts thousands of tourists throughout the year

The development of the Tower and viewpoint is the first stage of an ambitious and exciting project to develop the whole castle site. This is a key project in the recently agreed City-Region Deal, with funding being provided by both the Scottish and UK Governments.

Now that the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service are moving to a purpose made Justice Complex, there is a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a really significant attraction at the Castle which promotes tourism in Inverness and across the Highlands.



History

Inverness Castle is of international architectural and historical importance. A recent paper by Aonghus MacKechnie¹, states:

"The grouping of buildings that constitute Inverness Castle is architecturally very distinguished and crucial to determining the character of the city as the capital of the Highlands. The historical significance of the site is also great – it's past as well as its present contribution to the standing of the city as the Highlands capital."



The Viewing Platform

Included in Mackechnie's history of the Castle is an account of a conversation in 1840 concerning the design and completion of a South Tower:

"I visited the round tower in the castle . . . and must pronounce the view the grandest thing in Britain."

In 1840 the potential for the Castle towers to be used as viewing platforms was recognised.

Moving on 174 years the decision has been taken to exploit the stunning panoramic views from the North Tower towards Loch Ness and the Caledonian Canal around to the Moray Firth and Chanonry Point.



View from Tower along the ness and towards the Loch Ness

Interpretation and Inclusions

In addition to the viewing platform, landscaping works will link the museum and tower in terms of experience. Once visitors have completed their tour of the museum; they are directed up to the viewpoints and exhibition space.



View across Inverness to the west including Ben Wyvis

The journey up to the main attraction will be enhanced by creative commissions relating to the view from the top. These will reveal the folklore and history of the landmarks which can be seen from the Viewpoint and some uniquely Highland stories.

Through film, animation and graphic art visitors will discover the Brahan Seer, Saint Columba and the original Loch Ness Monster.

Less mobile visitors (or those who don't have a head for heights!) will also be able to experience the view without leaving the ground- via a film showing the view in all four seasons.

City-Region Deal

The tower is the first project to be undertaken as part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal. The development of the Tower is the first stage in transforming the Castle into an exciting tourist attraction.

The Castle development is part of the City-Region Deal which provides a transformative opportunity for the Region. Central to this will be a significant funding package which invests up to £315m into the regional economy. In addition to the Council and its partners the The City-Region Deal is funded by:



HM Government