

Business tourism event comes to Edinburgh



Business tourism is a growing area of the Scottish economy and now hundreds of people involved in the sector are coming to Edinburgh for the Business Tourism Scotland Conference 2015.

This will be held at Assembly Rooms Edinburgh and will feature workshops, networking opportunities and talks from industry experts to provide motivation, inspiration and practical tips for delegates.

Business events account for around 25 per cent of all visitors to Scotland, making an estimated annual contribution to the economy of £1.9 billion.

Taking place on Tuesday 1 December, the conference will be chaired by BBC Radio Scotland presenter Louise White and feature talks from Danish author and futurist Bo Kruger as well as popular business speaker David Pearl.

The conference will also feature a series of parallel sessions on the themes of Digital Opportunities, led by Charlie Smith, Director of Marketing at VisitScotland; and the Economic Impact of Business Tourism, with Bruce Redor, from Gaining Edge and the Joint Meetings Industry Council.

The specially curated 'Coming to Scotland' session, meanwhile, will focus on three business event case studies: the International Society of Addiction Medicine (ISAM) in Dundee; the Routes Europe conference in Aberdeen; and Conference Direct, based in Aviemore.

Organised by the Business Tourism Scotland Conference Steering

Group, the conference is supported by the Business Events team at VisitScotland; Scottish Enterprise; Marketing Edinburgh; People Make Glasgow (Glasgow City Marketing Bureau); Dundee & Angus Convention Bureau and VisitAberdeen.

Fergus Ewing, Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism, will provide the opening address. He said: "Scotland's business tourism sector is a key driver of growth, and makes a strong contribution to the economic vitality of Scotland's many tourism destinations, not only in Glasgow and Edinburgh but across the country. It is good to see destinations such as Inverness and Arran, for example, performing well and attracting business visitors from across the globe.

"Not only do international conferences bring tens of thousands of delegates to Scotland, but they also act as a shop window for all our country has to offer, thereby encouraging return visits. We will continue to build on this success, supporting our business tourism sector and reinforcing Scotland's reputation as a world-class conference venue destination."

Neil Brownlee, Head of Business Events at VisitScotland, said: "This conference is an excellent opportunity for members of Scotland's business tourism industry to share best practice and to gain fresh insight from some truly inspirational speakers.

"By taking a collaborative approach, we can ensure that Scotland continues to punch above its weight in this hugely important sector."

Danny Cusick, tourism director at Scottish Enterprise, added: "Building on the success of the 2014 conference, this year's programme aims to challenge us all to think differently about how we sell, promote and deliver business tourism in Scotland.

"We know that business tourists stay longer, typically spend 50 per cent more than leisure tourists and tend to travel

around Scotland rather than stay in one location, all of which is great news for Scotland's tourism companies and the impact it makes to our tourism economy.

"However, we need to ensure we help companies stay on top of new developments and this conference is designed to do exactly that: looking at emerging trends, how to engage audiences differently, the customer journey and the opportunities for collaboration, as well as providing practical tips that businesses can use no matter what their size or location."

Lesley Williams, Head of Business Tourism for Convention Edinburgh and Chair of Business Tourism Scotland, said: "The Business Tourism Scotland Conference is fast becoming one of the most important industry-to-industry business tourism events in the country. It's a thought-provoking and interactive session, that gives on-the-ground practical advice and insights, that anyone working within the conference and event sector, can take away and apply to their ongoing sales and business strategy.

"That we have the destination marketing bureaus of Scotland's four largest cities all working collaboratively to support VisitScotland and Scottish Enterprise to make the BTS Conference happen, is a testament to the positive results and outcomes it generates for delegates. Edinburgh is proud to be hosting this year's event."