



## **2018 Annual Report: Another year of success for Dundee and Angus' business events sector**

It is said that statistics is the science of learning from experience – our statistics for 2018 have been published and what we learn and develop from our experience in the previous years has materialised into very positive results.

The figures of the 2018 economic impact report showcase a £71 million revenue generated from the thriving business events sector in Dundee and Angus – 4% higher than last year's economic impact. The £3 million increase on the 2017 figures is testament to the value of the high-profile conferences and events held in the region in the past year.

In 2018, over 257,000 delegates, both from the UK and abroad, travelled to the area to attend a conference held in the city. A notable increase of 10% in the number of international delegates demonstrates the region's ever-growing popularity among international organisations. The increase in delegates last year resulted in a combined direct expenditure of over £14 million, 6% more than in 2017.

As shown in the 2018 figures, business events are an asset to the local economy of Dundee and Angus. The conferences and events held in Dundee in leading industry sectors continue to attract large numbers of delegates to the region, marking a positive impact on the direct expenditure.

Although the economic importance of the world-class conferences held in Dundee and Angus cannot be underestimated, business events as a sector is also a driver of a knowledge and talent-based economy.

The intellectual assets of the conferences and events held in the region go on to transfer existing knowledge to the local and international community. This active transfer of knowledge fuels the region's capacity to promote creativity and development for the benefit of a better, more sustainable, society.

Councillor John Alexander, leader of Dundee City Council, said of the report, "I am delighted to see the increase in direct economic impact of business tourism, but as welcome as that is, it only tells part of the story.

"People who come to the area for conferences, conventions and other business related activities are some of our best advocates. Not only do they make return leisure visits, they also tell friends and family about everything we have to offer, and other professionals about the first class conference facilities we have here.

"Business tourism is part of a virtuous circle that we are keen to continue expanding and growing."

With 2019 ahead of us, our vision is to work in tandem with the ambitions of Dundee and the wider region, and Scotland as a whole. Business events will be geared towards contributing to the nation's economy but also, to its aspirations for social development.

As we move away from the traditional model of tourism, we can direct our focus to the strengths and the opportunities that our region has to offer. Together with our business partners – from the universities to the hotels – we will work towards bringing to the fore the region's propensity for further advancement.

As affirmed by the 2018 statistics, Dundee and Angus is exceptionally well positioned to attract a variety of conferences year after year. Recent developments and ongoing initiatives, such as the opening of V&A Dundee and Project Legend #whereideasbecomelegend, an initiative led by VisitScotland's Business Events, have elevated Dundee's status in the business events sector.

Looking ahead, we have a wide range of major conferences in the pipeline for 2019. The conferences scheduled are estimated to be worth over £1.6 million – another large contribution to the region's economy.

Dundee's significant influence on the design industry has inspired two design and architecture events to run in the city. Together with the University of Dundee, we will be hosting 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the European Academy of Design: Running with Scissors, as well as 16<sup>th</sup> Architectural Humanities Research Association Conference. The two conferences are set to attract over 500 local and international academics.

Following a competitive bid, we have also secured major international events, including the very first 1st International Symposium on Screw Piles for Energy Applications, the EuroCoalAsh2019, a leading industry event, the Leisure Studies Association Conference (LSA2019) and the World Community Development Conference (WCDC2019). The opportunity to host conferences of such international scale is a chance for Dundee and the region to capitalise on its strengths of transformational thinking and inspire its global audience for further innovation and discovery.

In collaboration with Abertay University and the University of Dundee, we're also excited to welcome the return of The British Association of Sports and Exercise Sciences (BASES) – marking the second time since 2006 that BASES has held its student conference in Scotland.

Other conferences, within the fields of medicine, education, health, transportation and history are also set to take place in 2019. We look forward to collaborating with key organisations, ambassadors and local partners with the aim of promoting Dundee and Angus as a region open to innovation and creativity, with a forward-thinking approach and a drive for economic and social progress.

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