




Caithness.

For fresh starts
and bright futures.



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean



A wild and breathtaking landscape, with dramatic moorland and sparkling pools, rugged shores and an abundance of undisturbed wildlife.

This is Caithness – the lowland beyond the highlands of Scotland. An extraordinary setting that makes for extraordinary opportunities, inspired thinking and idyllic business locations.

Caithness is unfolding as a major location for renewable energy development and marine sciences. And a favourite destination for people in search of a better life.

Attracted by friendly communities, an outdoor lifestyle and the opportunity to shape and share a green, sustainable economy, more and more people are discovering that Caithness is the ideal place to work, rest and play. Thanks to a string of ambitious economic, business and educational programmes, a relatively untouched location is being sympathetically modernised to reflect the best of 21st century lifestyle values and aspirations.

A breath of fresh air

Unlike the rest of the Highlands and Islands, Caithness is mostly rich arable farmland, with extensive moorland sprinkled with lochans (mini-lochs) and pools. The Flow Country - the peatlands of Caithness, and Sutherland which it borders – is one of the last true wilderness areas in Europe, an internationally protected area that is home to numerous rare plants, insects and birds.

Caithness... is one of the last true wilderness areas in Europe.

Bounded by the Pentland Firth to the north and Moray Firth to the east, the county is famed for its tall majestic cliffs, offshore stacks, and long, unspoilt sandy beaches. Bottlenose dolphins, common and grey seals, otters and freshwater pearl mussel all thrive in and around our waters. And our sea cliffs are home to guillemots, kittiwakes, razorbills, puffins and shags. Rich in archeological and historical interest, Caithness is also one of the UK's top surfing locations, thanks to its excellent water quality and reliable waves.

Caithness is a breath of fresh air. A place that allows the time and space to reflect upon and enjoy the finer things of life.

Warmer and drier than you might think.



..our long summer days give you more time to enjoy all the natural beauty and outdoor activities on your doorstep.

Scotland is actually anything but cold. Its people are warm and welcoming, average temperatures are just 1° below the UK average, and it doesn't rain as much as it does elsewhere in the UK.

We don't have droughts or water rationing and while winter days are short, our long summer days give you more time to enjoy all the natural beauty and outdoor activities on your doorstep.

The wind, which can and does blow, is one of our area's greatest assets. In fuelling renewable energy initiatives, it creates wealth and jobs. It freshens the air and whips up some fantastic sailing, windsurfing and surfing conditions.

Kinbrace average minimum temperature 11.1°C,
UK average minimum temperature 12.1°C
Kinbrace average rainfall 993.8mm,
UK average 1126.1mm)

Source: www.metoffice.gov.uk

Close to the action.

Our geography creates the ideal proving ground for innovative communications and new media technologies. The very latest mobile and wireless technologies have opened up tremendous opportunities for knowledge-based industries, contact centres, and home-based workers and enterprises to thrive here.

With distance no object, Caithness adds a new, breathtaking dimension of a stunning backdrop to employment activities - stimulating ideas, boosting morale and enriching the work experience. You can live and work in idyllic locations, and still have your finger firmly on the pulse of 21st century life.



Easy to go from A to B.

As with most rural regions, you need a car in Caithness. Excellent, uncluttered trunk roads make the going fast, simple and stress-free. Average commute time is just over 20 minutes each way. In fact, it's never been easier to move around the region, the rest of Scotland, the UK and beyond.

Journey times in, to and from the area have been dramatically enhanced by better roads and bridges, faster trains, expanded air services and modern roll-on/roll-off ferries. The busy

port of Scrabster offers links to Stromness, and Gills Bay and John O'Groats both have ferries running to Orkney. Rail services connect Wick and Thurso to Inverness, with onward connections to other towns and cities in Scotland and the rest of the UK. There's a good bus network, with a regular coach service between Wick/Thurso and Inverness, and subsidised routes and post-bus services to rural areas. Wick, the county town, has its own airport with

links to Aberdeen and Edinburgh with both providing onward connections to national and international destinations.

Easier commuting and travel is hardly a reason for coming to Caithness - but it very quickly becomes a major reason for staying. It can change people's lives - with less stress, a shorter working day and more time to spend with family and friends. More freedom to do the things you want to do.



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A place to grow, learn and thrive.

The number of Scots who have risen to make significant contributions in literature, philosophy, politics, medicine, finance, law, engineering, electronics and countless other fields has always been hugely disproportionate for a country of Scotland's size. The key to this success has been education.

Scotland has an excellent academic record. As one of the first countries in the world to make education compulsory, it has vigorously pursued excellence in all levels of this field ever since – from pre-school to higher and further education.

Caithness is no exception. It's a great place for youngsters to grow and learn. The area scores well in league tables across the board. Children in primary and secondary schools are introduced to concepts such as innovation and enterprise, laying the foundations for future prosperity. Student

grades at secondary and sixth form level often outperform UK national averages – and Caithness has more high achievers than elsewhere in the region. The University of the Highlands and Islands Millennium Institute is widely regarded as a centre of excellence in higher education, bringing together 14 academic partner colleges and 50 local learning centres located throughout the Highlands and Islands. This includes the North Highland Campuses at Thurso, Wick, Dornoch and Alness. Environmental Research degrees here have the joint highest grade in Scotland and the fifth highest in the UK.

Beyond the classroom, programmes such as the Highland Youth Voice, and extensive sport, leisure and music facilities, increase the region's appeal to children, teenagers and young adults.

A small, safe and friendly community.

Caithness has a small population – around 25,000. Drawn by the prospect of a strong job market, more affordable housing and improved lifestyle, people from all over the UK have chosen to settle here and have become all the richer for the experience.

This is a warm, neighbourly community where it's easy for people to get to know and help one another. Around 900 voluntary organisations work in the county – 600 of them registered with the Caithness Voluntary Group.

With some of the lowest crime rates in the UK, Caithness is a safe place to raise a family. Community policing and strong links between all the emergency services assure the safety and wellbeing of our communities, even in the remotest areas.

The average price of a house in Caithness & Sutherland in 2005 was £69,250, lower than that of the Highlands and Islands (£88,000) or Scotland (£89,000). House prices have increased faster in Caithness & Sutherland between 2002 and 2005 (61%) compared with the Scottish average (70.9%).

Source: Caithness Infrastructure Study MVA Consultants – Positively Affecting Lives, 2008 Source: pers comm. Helen Mackay, Caithness Voluntary Groups 2008

On average 23% of pupils go on to further education in Wick, Thurso and Farr) compared with 18% for the Highlands and Islands. 27% of Thurso High School students go on to further education compared with the Scottish average (23%).

Source: HYPERLINK "http://www.scottishschoolsonline.gov.uk" www.scottishschoolsonline.gov.uk

Scottish Qualifications Authority Statistics show that the Highland Area demonstrated higher levels of attainment at publicly funded secondary schools that the Scottish Average in 2005/06

Source: HIE Caithness & Sutherland Economic Report 2007 Source: UHI Review 2007

The healthy option.

With clean, fresh air and a host of outdoor activities available to them, people coming to live here are off to a great start. As more come to enjoy our unique lifestyle advantages, much attention and investment is being focused on modern, efficient and accessible healthcare. Even though you live in an away-from-it-all location, we still need to place the full range of services on your doorstep. These include a new emergency department at Caithness general hospital in Wick, an air ambulance

service, and the Centre for Health and Science in Inverness, a unique £23 million scheme which will transform medical and dental services for thousands of patients throughout the region, providing the full complement of healthcare research, development, training and delivery. Among its many facilities are the Centre for Rural Health, the Highland Diabetes Institute, Wick Dental School and several complementary healthcare providers.

Just the job.

Historically renowned for fishing, farming and flagstone, the Caithness economy is becoming more and more diverse. Much has changed since the discovery of rich oil and gas reserves off the coast of Scotland. Not least the discovery of even richer and more sustainable sources of energy.

Caithness' expanse of coastal waters, strong waves and tides, make it one of the best locations in Europe for spearheading wind, wave and tidal power. Companies operating in wind, wave and renewable energy are very active here. Onshore, hydro-electric and biomass schemes are powering local communities.

Fast emerging as a world leader in the development and production of renewable energy, the area already has a strong, knowledgeable supply chain of complementary companies that can conceive, devise, test, manufacture, install, operate, distribute and support renewable energy technology – from research to full-scale commercial implementation.

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A number of public and private sector initiatives are building on the area's natural advantages in the food and drink, tourism and engineering sectors, and the business and financial services sector is also growing.

Training, career development and recruitment

Training and retraining services are available through Skills Development Scotland (SDS). And Scotland has a wide range of services to help people find jobs in their chosen profession. Many are available online, so you can start your search well before to make your move to Caithness.



Movers and shakers.

Our region provides the environment and resources to inspire today's industrial and academic pioneers.

- The European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), where developers all over the world are able to test prototype wave and tidal devices in ideal conditions.
- Environmental Research Institute (ERI), providing world-class research expertise into contemporary regional, national and international environmental issues through innovation and excellence.
- A cluster of high-tech engineering firms has been created in Thurso and Wick since the decommissioning of the Dounreay nuclear power plant.

- The UK's National Nuclear Archive (NNA) at Wick: a £17 million pound project that will create many specialist jobs.
- Mey Selections, Scotland's fastest growing food & drink business, symbolises the county's success in combining sound environmental strategy with profitability: turnover has grown ninefold in just three years.
- BT are enabling contact centre agents in the area to work from home.
- Hundreds of niche start-ups are engaged in emerging industries such as renewable energy and marine sciences, as well as other sectors such as tourism, creative services and food and drink.

Relax. Everything you need is right here.

Despite its small population, Caithness has something for every sports enthusiast – from football and cycling to martial arts and kayaking. It's the perfect destination for people with busy social lives and a taste for adventure.

The county is a must for outdoor sports fans, providing lively sea conditions for surfers, sailors, and kite-boarders – the O'Neil Highland Surf Open Championships are held each year at Thurso. Inland we have some excellent challenges for

mountaineers and rock climbers, and fast-flowing rivers for canoeing and salmon fishing. It's also ideal for the more gentle pursuits of bird watching and hillwalking.

But it's not all about sport and the great outdoors. Music, visual arts, theatre and dance play a huge part of Scottish highland culture and identity. All over the county, there are plenty of opportunities to see, hear and get involved. Major rock, pop, folk and classical musical festivals take place in spectacular settings. Countless smaller venues deliver a thriving music, theatre

and dance scene. A major village hall redevelopment programme has revitalised our rural communities, and residents and visitors alike can witness the best of Scottish traditions at highland games events held throughout the summer months.

Whatever your pace and style. Whatever your ambition. We have something for you.

Find out more ...

Further information can be found at:

www.caithness.org
www.hie.co.uk
www.highland.gov.uk
www.cvg.org.uk
www.northhighlandsscotland.com
www.mey-selections.com
www.cnsrp.co.uk





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