Scotland's Economic Performance

Scottish Stone Group

Background

The Scottish Stone Group was established in 2016 by several of Scotland’s leading businesses in the stone sector in response to Historic Environment Scotland’s funded British Geological Survey report ‘State of the Scottish Stone Industry’. The report outlined the current state of the Scottish stone sector as well as the potential and need to grow the sector and create jobs. As part of our response, we have attached the ‘State of the Scottish Stone Industry’ report for further background information.

We formed the Scottish Stone Group as we want to promote the use of indigenous natural stone and grow the industry, creating more jobs and apprenticeships in Scotland as well as promoting an important environmentally sustainable material.

Scottish Stone Sector

The remit of the inquiry is: “To examine Scotland’s economic performance since 2007 and understand the reasons for recent trends and divergences in performance between Scotland and the UK as a whole, other regions/nations in the UK, and other countries in the EU. The inquiry will also identify challenges and opportunities facing the Scottish economy over the next ten years and understand what action is required to make Scotland’s economy more inclusive, innovative and international”.


- Roughly 160 people currently employed in the stone quarrying and processing industry in Scotland;
- £400m worth of stone was imported into the UK annually; if Scotland comprises roughly 10% of UK consumption that means around £40m;
- Currently, the combined turnovers of the Scottish Stone Industry is approximately £10m.

Scotland has more stone buildings per head than any country in the world.

Natural stone structures are part of Scotland’s national identity and demand for this signature building material is starting to grow again, not only for new buildings but also streetscaping and restoration work. However, 85% of current stone is now imported into this country at a cost of £40m per annum to the Scottish economy.

We are proud that the Scottish stone sector adheres to some of the strictest health and safety policies and we provide a high quality product. We face competition from countries which do not have the same high health and safety policies or quality assurances as we do in the UK.
We believe support from decision makers in the Scottish Parliament and at a local authority level to promote the high quality Scottish Stone sector can help reverse that trend by encouraging the use of locally sourced and processed stone.

To give a short overview, we believe the Scottish stone industry is an important sector to promote as follows:

- **Economical** - the stone sector is an important manufacturing industry and has the potential to create more jobs in Scotland. In time this could allow for more apprenticeships and keeps the specialised skills function of this traditional industry alive through the succession planning process;
- **Good Investment** – Stone lasts and should serve a purpose for hundreds of years, it is best value of any building material in terms of life cost;
- **Environmental** – natural stone is not made, it already exists, processing it uses minimal energy. There is a dramatic difference in the carbon footprint between our own indigenous stone and imported stone, reconstituted (manmade/lookalikes) and other building materials;
- **Clear Provenance** – you know where indigenous stone has come from, quality assurances and future availability;
- **Social Responsibility** – we are ethical, compliant employers operating within the Scottish economy;
- **Built Heritage** – Visitors are drawn to Scotland to admire what our forebears achieved with natural stone. A vibrant stone processing industry has a vital role in preserving the historic built heritage and making an important contribution in the construction of our future built environment.

We want to see a thriving sector that allows for our future built heritage to reflect Scotland’s natural stone materials and a sector that is able to support skilled manufacturing jobs and apprenticeships.

**Future of the Scottish Stone Sector**

The BGS report on the Scottish stone sector outlines the current state of the Stone sector and we believe there is an opportunity to grow the sector in Scotland.

We appreciate the sector itself has an important role to promote the industry and outline the benefits of using Scottish stone. The Scottish Stone Group has been set up to outline the positives that a strong stone sector would bring to the Scottish economy and environment and to help provide information to Scotland’s elected representatives.

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We would welcome the Economy Committee to look at how the Scottish Parliament can support the industry and help create skilled jobs and produce sustainable and ethically sourced materials in Scotland.
We would welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to the Economy Committee as required to provide further information on the Scottish stone sector.

Scottish Stone Group