

Press Release

Scotland a better place to live, despite lower GDP compared to UK average

12 October 2016 – Announcement of Scottish GDP performance for the second quarter of 2016 is keenly awaited and today's figures will be interpreted in the light of the uncertainty leading up to the Brexit vote. Figures show that GDP grew by 0.4% during this period, a lower figure compared to the UK average of 0.7%. But Scotland has consistently outperformed other parts of the UK when it comes to well-being and social progress indicators.

“This is not at all paradoxical. Higher GDP does not mean greater well-being overall. GDP simply measures how busy our economy is, but tells us nothing about its effect on people or on the environment. In other words, the *quality* of economic activity is just as important as the *quantity*”, noted Matthew Crighton Convenor of LINK's Economics Group. “Our economy should be a means to wellbeing, providing us with satisfying work, enough income, and products and services that are good for society, without harming the environment. If we aspire to a happy population and a healthy environment, GDP is simply not synonymous with this kind of progress. Other information needs to be considered alongside GDP. Luckily there is an increasing recognition of this and interesting data is available to us”, added Matthew.

The Social Progress Index, published yesterday, allows comparisons between Scotland and other parts of the UK. Scotland outperforms other UK regions on most indicators, showing that our quality of life is better. Moreover, recent personal well-being data from the Office for National Statistics, shows that over the period 2012 – 2016, Scotland, especially the North and West, score higher than most other parts of the UK.

This confirms the relevance and importance of Scotland's National Performance Framework for policy development. The National Performance Framework includes a range of indicators against which we can gauge our progress beyond GDP.

Scottish Environment LINK members has been working with the Scottish Government on promoting and improving a suite of indicators that can adequately reflect the wellbeing of society and the health of our environment as well as the state of our economy. Given the oft-quoted adage that ‘what we measure affects what we do’, clear indicators are needed to measure progress towards a more sustainable Scotland.

ENDS**For more information, please contact:**

Matthew Crighton, LINK Economics Group Convenor
Email: mcrighton@foe-scotland.org.uk
Tel: 07851348426

Daphne Vlastari, LINK Advocacy Officer
Email: daphne@scotlink.org
Tel: 0131 225 4345



Notes to Editors:

- Scotland's Gross Domestic Product 2nd quarter 2016
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Economy/PubGDP/GDP2016Q2>
- EU Regional Social Progress Index http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/maps/social_progress
- Personal Wellbeing in the UK 2015 – 2016
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015to2016>
- Personal Well-being in the UK: Local Authority update, 2015 – 2016
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/localauthorityupdate2015to2016>
- The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework (NPF):
<http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms>
- Link to Flourishing Scotland page and NPF paper <http://www.scotlink.org/workareas/economics-forum/>

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 35 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899). LINK is core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts.

Visit us at www.scotlink.org or follow us on [@ScotLINK](https://twitter.com/ScotLINK)

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899). LINK is core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts.

Registered office: 2 Grosvenor House, Shore Road, Perth PH2 8BD, T. 01738 630804 email information@scotlink.org
Parliamentary office: 3rd Floor, Gladstone's Land, 483 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2NT, T 0131 225 4345
advocacy@scotlink.org