

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This new Moray Local Development Plan is the first to be prepared under the new process introduced by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) etc Act 2006. The Local Development Plan replaces the Moray Structure Plan 2007 and Moray Local Plan 2008, and provides a single forward planning document that presents a vision and spatial strategy for directing growth in Moray for the next 10- 20 years.
- 1.2. A Main Issues Report was published for consultation in November 2012. This identified some of the key policy matters that required to be addressed by the Review, and put forward options and alternatives on where new development should take place. The responses to this consultation were used to shape the content of the Proposed Plan.
- 1.3. The Proposed Plan was issued for consultation between March and May 2014 and represented the settled view of Moray Council on the form and content for the new Local Development Plan. Unresolved objections to the Proposed Plan were referred to an Examination, where independent Reporters arbitrated. The findings of the Reporters were published in April 2015 and are binding upon the Council.
- 1.4. The Council is committed to the production of Supplementary Guidance (SG) on several topics, which will expand upon policy statements contained in this Plan, and assist in the consistent interpretation and implementation of these policies. Policies and sites to be subject to SG are indicated in the relevant sections of the Plan. All such Guidance shall be subject to consultation, following which it will become a formal part of the Local Development Plan.
- 1.5. The contents of this Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance have been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment, and Natura Habitat Regulations Assessment.

## **2. Vision for Moray**

- 2.1 Sustainable economic development is a key objective for both the Scottish Government and Moray Council. The economic and employment benefits of business and industrial growth should be a material consideration in any development proposals.
- 2.2 The Vision for Moray is strongly based on that of the Moray Economic Strategy.
- 2.3 It seeks to have:
- A growing population, which retains more of its younger people and attracts new residents to the area.
  - A broad business base with stable, well paid employment; a focus on high quality jobs in engineering; science and technology; growth of established tourism, food, drink sectors.
  - Sufficient housing land to meet the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, that will facilitate the provision of affordable housing, and to ensure high quality residential developments.
  - Attractive, sustainable environments where people will wish to live and work, which incorporate high quality design; green and blue corridors and open spaces.
  - A policy context which supports growth and development, whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing the natural and built heritage, which are amongst Moray's prime assets.
  - Good, efficient transport links to the rest of the country, with the encouragement of active travel and enhancement of rail as alternatives to journeys by car and truck.
  - Renewable energy technologies; reduced carbon emissions; embedded within all development
- 2.4 To assist in achieving and delivering this, the Local Development Plan
- Provides an adequate supply of land designated for development
  - Responds positively to economic development proposals
  - Safeguards and enhances Moray's environmental qualities
  - Promotes low carbon, sustainable development, and provides alternative travel options to car use.
- 2.5 The Local Development Plan reflects Scottish Government core principles/objectives as expressed in the National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy, of having a low carbon economy; an increased emphasis on placemaking; respecting and maximising environmental assets; a sustainable approach to growth and development; being a well connected place.

### 3. Spatial Strategy

- 3.1 The proposed strategy for the distribution of housing and employment land development across Moray is a continuation of that taken by the 2008 Local Plan ie a Settlement Hierarchy of:











|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Primary Centre</b>         | Elgin   |
| <b>Secondary Centres</b>      | Buckie, Forres; Keith; Lossiemouth  |
| <b>Third Tier Settlements</b> | Aberlour; Alves; Archiestown; Burghead; Craigellachie; Cullen; Cummington; Dallas; Dufftown; Duffus; Dyke; Findhorn; Findochty; Fochabers; Garmouth; Hopeman; Kingston; Kinloss; Lhanbryde; Mosstodloch; Newmill; Portgordon; Portknockie; Rafford; Rothes; Rothiemay; Urquhart |
| <b>4th Tier</b>               | Rural Groupings (currently 76)  |

- 3.2 This will see the majority of new development taking place in Elgin, in accordance with the objectives of the Moray Economic Strategy, to continue with Elgin's role as a regional centre and focus for growth.
- 3.3 The secondary centres have a more local, sub-Moray role as centres for their catchments, and will accommodate a lesser level of new development.
- 3.4 The third tier settlements are expected to grow in proportion to their current size, and land allocations have been made at a lower level and in accordance with existing supply. However, some settlements have been proposed for no, or limited growth, due to capacity or character issues.
- 3.5 Rural groupings are regarded as providing development opportunities in rural areas, based around existing, established groupings of buildings. These present a means of supporting local facilities (schools; halls; services) and the identification of small scale development sites can assist in reducing demand for houses in the open countryside.
- 3.6 The formation of a new town as an option for accommodating growth was not supported, and concentration and expansion of existing settlements was preferred. However, taking a longer term view of future employment opportunities in the A96 Forres to Elgin corridor, there may be merit in considering the release of some land at Alves as an "expanded settlement" at some point in the future. Accordingly a LONG term allocation has been shown on the Alves proposals map as an indication of possible future direction for growth of this settlement. This may be slightly at odds with Alves's current position in the settlement hierarchy, but previous versions of the Local Plan have had strategic land reserves at the village, and the allocation of a LONG designation would represent the re-introduction of this previous approach.

### Spatial Strategy Map



#### Spatial Strategy Map Key

- |   |                               |  |                                 |
|---|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
|  | Primary Centre<br>1st Tier    |   | Tourism Gateways                |
|  | Secondary Centres<br>2nd Tier |   | Major Business<br>Locations     |
|  | 3rd Tier Settlements          |   | Offshore Wind<br>Service Centre |
|  | Rural Communities             |  | Trunk Roads                     |
|   |                               |  | 'A' Roads                       |
|   |                               |  | Railway                         |

#### 4. Plan Format

4.1 The Moray Local Development Plan does not cover the whole of the Moray Council administrative area, the southern part of which lies within the Cairngorms National Park, which is subject to its own Local Development Plan.

4.2 This Plan comprises a number of elements:

- **Primary Policies** - which provide an over-arching policy context which reflects Scottish Government objectives.
- **Planning Policies** - which cover the following topics:
  - Economic Development
  - Residential Development
  - Natural Environment
  - Built Environment
  - Environmental Protection
  - Environmental Resources
  - Retail and Commercial Development
  - Transport and Accessibility
  - Implementation
- **Settlement Statements** – A map of land designations showing sites proposed for development, with descriptive texts outlining the purpose and design requirements for each site.
- **Action Programme**, which indicates how the various policies and proposals in the Plan will be taken forward; by whom; when.
- A series of **Supplementary Guidance** which provide additional information and detail for specific policies. These may be updated, replaced, or additional Guidance produced, during the currency of the Plan.
- **Proposals Maps** covering the whole of the Local Development Plan area, which shows the various policy areas. Settlements, are shown in more detail on individual inset maps.
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**
- **Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

## How to Use the Plan

The LDP should be read as a whole and sets out the policies for assessing planning applications and sets out exactly where development is expected to take place over the next 5 years. The Principal Policies on Sustainable Economic Growth, Climate Change and Placemaking are overarching and should be applied to all development proposals. Development proposals should also comply with the more detailed policies set out under land use planning topics and if applicable, the detailed site designations. The part of Moray within the Cairngorms National Park has its own separate local development plan.

The Moray Local Development Plan will be reviewed and replaced within 5 years. The Action Programme will be reviewed annually.

The Plan is supported by supplementary guidance which provides extra detail on some of the policies and proposals. Supplementary guidance forms part of the development plan and has that status for decision making. The initial suite of Supplementary Guidance covers;

- Affordable Housing
- Accessible Housing
- Climate Change
- Housing in the Countryside
- Trees in Development
- Urban Design
- Rural Groupings

This will be added to during the Plan period.

In determining planning applications, the Council will apply appropriate weight to all of the issues and material considerations before reaching a decision. Material considerations will include Masterplans and development briefs which will be approved by the Council as non- statutory supplementary guidance, providing more detail on site designations within the Plan.