

## 3. DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY

### Economic Development

#### Introduction

Local Plans contain economic development policies and business land allocations for the following reasons:

- To provide locations for new business development and allow job creation to take place.
- To separate uses and activities which may not be compatible.
- To support the role of historical, traditional industries within the area.
- To control development in sensitive areas.
- To provide a sustainable economic infrastructure, making best use of population, location and transport links.
- To accommodate new trends/technologies and respond to forecast growth areas.

By doing so, the planning process can create conditions which support economic growth, sustain and create jobs, and contribute to the prosperity of the area.

#### Context

The Scottish Executive document 'The Framework for Economic Development in Scotland' provides the vision for the future of the Scottish economy. The contribution of the planning system is recognised through its land use role, encouraging regeneration, and safeguarding the environment.

National guidance on how this should be done at a local level is provided by Scottish Planning Policy 2: 'Economic Development' (SPP2) and the National Planning Framework for Scotland. These documents, both published by the Scottish Executive, take a spatial, or geographic overview of Scotland's economic growth prospects, and detail what the planning response should be. There is however, no specific role or provision made for the Moray area, other than that local growth and demand should be accommodated and that rural development and diversification should be supported.

The Structure Plan seeks the identification of business and industrial land allowances along with the retention and provision of strategic business locations in Forres and Elgin. It also recognises the need to promote business development within rural areas and the provision of tourism development opportunities.

## POLICY ED1: SUPPLY OF EMPLOYMENT LAND

New employment land allocations are identified in the settlement statements to ensure an adequate supply of land over the 5 year period of the Local Plan and beyond, designations within the main towns should provide:

Elgin: an additional 10-15 hectares over and above existing provision.

Forres: an additional 5-10 hectares over and above existing provision for general industrial use.

Buckie: an additional 5 hectares over and above existing provision.

Keith: an additional 5 hectares over and above existing provision.

Other locations: provision of up to 2 hectares according to local demand and availability of appropriate sites.

### **JUSTIFICATION:**

An adequate supply of land has to be allocated to accommodate anticipated development rates, provide some flexibility in terms of sites/locations, be able to cater for unforeseen proposals, and indicate the longer term direction of growth beyond the current Local Plan period.

The designation of sites is therefore based on more than just the annual average take up over previous years.

Specific designations are set for the main towns where greatest demand has been experienced. In smaller towns and villages, business related proposals up to 2 hectares can be considered to meet local demand. In all cases sites will be expected to be serviceable and provide appropriate protection for the natural heritage and landscape, and the provision of site mitigation in terms of environmental impact.

### **CONFORMS TO:**

The policy conforms to the provisions of SPP2: Economic Development and the National Planning Framework for Scotland

### **POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:**

Policy IMP4; Action Plan

## **POLICY ED2: DEVELOPMENT OF NEW EMPLOYMENT LAND**

The development of new employment land will require to satisfy the following requirements:

- (i) **Road Access:** Roads should be constructed to Moray Council standards for adoption, and provision made for on site and off site parking. Layout proposals should provide for pedestrian and cycle links, and provide options for linking with public transport services (e.g. by the provision of bus stops/shelters) where appropriate.
- (ii) **Drainage:** Foul water will require to be taken to the public sewer. Surface water drainage should incorporate appropriate sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) which should be operational for the lifetime of the development. Due to the potential for pollution to run off water from spillage e.g. oil, drains may require to be trapped as advised by SEPA/Scottish Water.
- (iii) **Landscaping:** Requirements for individual sites will be specified in more detail in the relevant settlement designation. Proposals should address issues such as screening, sound barriers, treatment at boundaries, and the general visual appearance of the site. Details of maintenance arrangements will be required in respect of landscaped areas.
- iv) **Design:** Where site frontages are highly visible a high standard of design of buildings and layout of yard, storage areas and parking must be incorporated.
- v) **Designing Out Crime:** New estates should be designed so that they provide deterrents to crime by ensuring sufficient lighting, planting and boundary treatments. Consultation with the Local Authority Liaison Officer will be carried out for all new proposals.
- vi) **Natural Environment:** Provision will have to be made to ensure appropriate protection for the natural environment and the use of enhanced opportunities for the natural heritage and integration to adjacent lands.
- vii) **Waste Management:** Provision should be made for the collection, segregation and management of waste. Where this is not being provided on a communal basis such provision will be sought on individual sites when applications for planning permission are submitted.

### **JUSTIFICATION:**

New industrial estates/business parks must meet appropriate standards in terms of roads, drainage, parking and landscaping to achieve a suitable degree of amenity.

This will help to ensure that the development of new sites is looked at in a comprehensive manner and allow an overall view to be taken of infrastructure requirements.

Individual proposals will therefore comply with an overall plan and not prejudice future provision/development.

It will also ensure that the visual impact does not have a negative impact on the area.

### **CONFORMS TO:**

The policy conforms to the provisions of SPP2: Economic Development

### **POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:**

Policy IMP1: Development Requirements.

Policy IMP2: Development Impact Assessments. Development briefs may be prepared for some of the newly designated sites.

### **POLICY ED3: BUSINESS USES ON INDUSTRIAL ESTATES**

Recognised industrial estates will be primarily reserved for uses defined by Classes 4 (business); 5 (general industrial) and 6 (storage or distribution) of the Use Classes Order 1997. Some activities within Class 5 may be considered inappropriate for environmental reasons (e.g. noise, dust, vibration or fumes) and will not be permitted.

Shops and outright retail activities will not be allowed; the only retailing permissible will be that which is considered to be ancillary to some other activity (e.g. manufacture; wholesale). For the purposes of this policy, ancillary is taken as being linked directly to the existing use of the unit and comprising no more than 10% of total floor area up to a total of 1,000 square metres gross.

Class 2 (financial, professional services), Class 11 (assembly and leisure), and activities which do not fall within a specific use class will be considered in relation to their suitability to the industrial estate concerned, and the available supply of employment land.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

The policy seeks to ensure that sites are used primarily for the role that was intended i.e. to provide land for employment related activities. It also restricts non conforming uses, including visiting members of the public where traffic generation may cause conflict. This approach will also help to retain town centres as the principal retail areas.

**CONFORMS TO:**

The policy conforms to the provisions of SPP2: Economic Development.

**POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:**

Policy R4: Neighbourhood and Local Shops.

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### **POLICY ED4: BUSINESS PARKS**

Business parks accommodate uses which require a higher amenity/environmental setting than is available on an industrial estate, and may include commercial activities e.g. offices, call centres and high technology uses. Development that adversely impacts on the high amenity environment of a business park will not be permitted.

Business Parks are identified within the Plan at Forres Enterprise Park, and Barmuckity and Riverview at Elgin. Smaller scale business parks are identified at Buckie, Keith and Lossiemouth.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

The policy seeks to provide locations where a high quality environment is available, and to retain these sites as a location for new/modern enterprises. This will assist in the attraction of inward investment and provide office relocation opportunities. The Business Parks can provide a location for non-retail, commercial enterprises, who do not require a town centre location

**CONFORMS WITH:**

The policy conforms with SPP2 Economic Development.

**POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:**

Policy IMP4 Action Plan, ED1 Development of New Employment Land.

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## POLICY ED5: EXISTING BUSINESS AREAS

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Within existing business areas, business development, redevelopment or expansion (excluding retail) will be acceptable, subject to environmental considerations and compatibility with neighbouring uses. These areas tend to have a long established usage and the expansion or introduction of non business uses will not be permitted, except where the total redevelopment of the site is proposed.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

The policy seeks to ensure the retention of sites that have a long established business use, where the continuation of this principal use is appropriate. The introduction of non conforming uses (e.g. housing) could through time prejudice the principal activity.

This approach will establish the primacy of the business use of the site, and the policy allows the consideration of alternative uses only when the whole site is involved.

**CONFORMS TO:**

SPP2: Economic Development.

**POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:**

Policy IMP1 Development Requirements.

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## POLICY ED6: OPPORTUNITY SITES

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The town and village statements will identify 'opportunity sites' which present the opportunity for appropriate alternative uses in the event of a proposal to redevelop. These are often vacant or derelict sites that are no longer required for their original or previous uses. Vacant or derelict sites are usually brownfield and therefore will require to be assessed with regard to contaminated land.

Any suggested uses that are given should be viewed as illustrative examples only, and not taken as a definitive list of acceptable activities.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

The policy seeks to promote sustainable development and encourage the use of derelict or vacant land as an alternative to greenfield sites.

**CONFORMS TO:**

The policy conforms to SPP2: Economic Development. PAN33 on the Development of Contaminated Land.

**POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:**

Policy IMP1: Development Requirements; Policy IMP3: Developer Contributions,

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## POLICY ED7: TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Proposals for telecommunications equipment will be assessed on their landscape and visual impact, compatibility with surrounding uses and effect upon environmental designations. Locational requirements (on technical/operational grounds, and links with transport corridors) will be recognised during consideration of proposals.

Applicants must justify their choice of site including the potential to share facilities, and may be asked to carry out measures to disguise or camouflage installations. Sharing of facilities must not result in increased adverse visual impact.

### **JUSTIFICATION:**

The Council would wish to encourage the uptake and use of modern communications technologies, as a means of remaining economically competitive. Often these have to be located on high ground, or in proximity to roads and railways.

The visual impact of telecommunications masts on the landscape, scenery and environment must be minimised wherever possible.

The health and safety levels of radio frequency emissions are controlled by other regulatory bodies, and are not deemed to be a valid 'planning consideration'. Accordingly, they will not be taken into account when considering applications.

### **CONFORMS TO:**

The policy conforms to NPPG19 on Radio Telecommunications. PAN62 on Radio Telecommunications. Circular 5/2001 on Development by Telecommunications Code Systems Operators.

### **POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:**

Policy IMP1 on Development Requirements.

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## **POLICY ED8: RURAL BUSINESS PROPOSALS**

New business developments, or extensions to existing industrial/economic activities in the countryside will be permitted if they meet the following criteria:

- a. careful control over siting, design, landscape and visual impact, and emissions. In view of the rural location, industrial estate/urban designs may not be appropriate,
- b. a locational justification for the site concerned if serviced industrial land is available nearby,
- c. the capacity of the local infrastructure to accommodate the proposals,
- d. environmental considerations, including the impact upon natural and built heritage designations, with appropriate protection for the natural environment; the use of enhanced opportunities for natural heritage integration into adjoining land, and
- e. the location of the development close to populated rural areas where appropriate.

Proposals involving the rehabilitation of existing properties (e.g. farm steadings) to provide business-premises will be encouraged, provided access and parking arrangements are acceptable. Where noise emission or any other aspect is considered to be incompatible with surrounding uses, there will be a presumption to refuse.

### **JUSTIFICATION:**

The Council wishes to support the rural economy by granting approval to new business proposals that fit into the environment and can be adequately serviced. In addition, there are already many traditional business operations in rural areas, long established, which may have expansion requirements and for whom re-location is not a realistic option.

New developments can help to sustain rural employment and rural economies.

### **CONFORMS TO:**

The policy conforms to SPP15 on Rural Development, and SPP2 on Economic Development.

### **POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:**

Policy IMP1: Development Requirements.

Policy IMP2: Development Impact Assessments.

Policy IMP3: Developer Contributions.

Policy R4: Neighbourhood and Local Shops.

## POLICY ED9: TOURISM FACILITIES AND ACCOMMODATION

The Council will generally support, proposals which contribute towards Moray's role and image as a tourist area. Proposals will require to:-

- a. be compatible with policies to safeguard and enhance the built and natural environment,
- b. provide adequate infrastructure arrangements (e.g. roads, parking, water, drainage), and
- c. demonstrate a locational need for a specific site.

Developments built as holiday accommodation (e.g. caravans or chalets) should be retained for that purpose and not become permanent residences. Conditions will be applied to planning consents to control this aspect.

For caravan and chalet parks in countryside areas, visual impact and access arrangements will be important considerations. Proposals must demonstrate what landscaping measures will be taken to assist integrate the site into its rural setting, in addition to providing on-site amenity. Rigid formal arrangements should be avoided with stances/units separated to provide discrete locations/surroundings

### **JUSTIFICATION:**

Tourism is a significant aspect of the local economy, providing jobs and in particular supporting rural areas. Much of Morays attraction is its environment with heritage, scenery and outdoor activities key features.

Whilst wishing to encourage and support development within this sector, care must be taken to ensure that the assets which create this attraction are not damaged by inappropriate or unsympathetic development.

### **CONFORMS TO:**

The policy conforms to SPP15 on Rural Development.

### **POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:**

Policy IMP1: Development Requirements.

Policy IMP2: Development Impact Assessments.

Policy R4: Neighbourhood and Local Shops.

Policy IMP4 Action Plan.



## POLICY ED10: TOURISM ROADSIDE SIGNS

There will be a presumption against granting planning permission for roadside advertisements for tourism signage. Instead, proposals will be encouraged to follow the approved policy as agreed between Moray Council and Visit Scotland. To qualify under this policy a number of criteria have to be observed.

- a. establishments must be in membership of a Visit Scotland Quality Assurance Scheme,
- b. attractions and facilities will be sign-posted from the nearest main tourist route (these are identified by the policy), or from an adjacent themed trail. Where further turns onto other roads are required, additional confirmatory signs will be permitted,
- c. signs will be worded with the commercial name of the destination or a generic title (e.g. B&B). No other wording will be permitted,
- d. Moray Council (and the Scottish Executive for trunk roads) as roads authorities will determine such matters as exact dimensions, design, materials used and exact location of signs, and
- e. the costs of design, manufacture, erection, relocation; maintenance or removal of signs will be borne in full by the establishment(s) concerned.

### JUSTIFICATION:

Promotion of tourist attractions and directional information are required to support tourism as an economic sector, particularly with a large segment of car borne visitors.

There is also a need to ensure that roadsides do not become cluttered with road signs; confusing drivers and prejudicing road safety.

Thus there is a presumption against outright advertisements in favour of a more standardised directional/information signs promoting only those establishments which have reached a basic quality threshold as assessed by Visit Scotland.

### CONFORMS TO:

Scottish Executive Circular 27/1995

### POLICY CROSS REFERENCE/ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:

Moray Council Sign Posting Policy.