



the **MORAY** council

Non Technical Summary



Draft Local Transport Strategy Environmental Report

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Moray Council is currently preparing its Second Local Transport Strategy to update the First LTS adopted in 2001. The Second Local Transport Strategy will set out the Council's vision, objectives, and action plans to address transport issues going forward.



Plan Area

The region of Moray is in the north east of Scotland bordered by Highland to the west and Aberdeenshire to the south and east. The northern boundary is contiguous with the coastline of the North Sea.

Moray connects with other parts of Scotland, Europe and beyond through the trunk road and rail networks. The two trunk roads in the area are the A96 (Aberdeen to Inverness) and the A95 (Keith to Aviemore). The Aberdeen to Inverness rail line includes stations at Elgin, Forres and Keith. The two nearest airports are Inverness and Aberdeen.

Moray council have been working in partnership with key stakeholders and the Community in the development of the Strategy since 2007.

The Draft LTS also reflects a process of ongoing consultation with Statutory Consultees such as SNH, Historic Scotland and SEPA.

LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The LTS sets out a clear vision and strategic objectives for transport in Moray and will inform the Council's transport investment for the strategy and beyond.

The LTS has to work in harmony with a hierarchy of Transport Plans including (but not limited to):

- National Planning Framework (NPF2)
- Moray Development Plan (Structure Plan and Local Plan)
- Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR)
- Hitrans Regional Transport Strategy 2007

The Draft LTS also has to consider the key planning and policy documents and changes that have arisen since the publication of the 2001 LTS.



The LTS components (Vision, Key Objectives, Sub-Objectives and Action Plans) have been assessed through the SEA Process.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

A Strategic Environmental Assessment is required under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 to assess the likely significance of environmental effects of public sector Plans, Programmes and Strategies (PPS).

The Environmental Report presents the findings of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Draft Local Transport Strategy. The SEA of the LTS aims to integrate environmental considerations into the decision making process for the Strategy.

The Environmental Report identifies and addresses potential adverse environmental effects of the vision, objectives and action plans that form the Strategy. This NTS provides a summary of the assessment process and findings to date.

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN MORAY

Baseline environmental information for Moray is provided in Chapter 5 of the Environmental Report.

The Moray region benefits from high quality physical attributes. The Local Transport Strategy in its current form has considered the environment through its vision, objectives and Action Plans. The environmental baseline provides a benchmark for the current environmental 'capacity' of the plan area and will inform any monitoring and future plan updates.

CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The Second LTS has been prepared in accordance with the Scottish Government's "Guidance on Local Transport Strategies". The Draft LTS builds on the previous LTS published in 2001.

Under Schedule 3 of the SEA Act, it is a requirement to consider reasonable alternatives to the Strategy.

A number of scenarios have been considered during the preparation of the Plan including a baseline scenario. These Scenarios were developed during stakeholder workshops held in 2007.



The Scenarios include:

- **Scenario 1** - Maintain current level of commitment (Baseline)
- **Scenario 2** - Do minimum
- **Scenario 3** - Focus on Road Safety
- **Scenario 4** - Focus on Mode Change
- **Scenario 5** - Focus on Main Settlements and Strategic Transport Corridors
- **Scenario 6** - Road Based
- **Scenario 7** - Integrated Transport – Invest to improve access across modes

It was agreed that overall, a balanced package of measures would provide the most effective policy framework and therefore Scenario 7 (Integrated Transport – Invest to improve across modes) performs best against the different appraisal criteria, as well as meeting the objectives set for local transport and SEA objectives.

SEA ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The assessment concludes that overall the proposed Strategy will have a positive impact, particularly in relation to factors such as accessibility, road safety, health, and promotion of modal shift and associated activities such as walking and cycling. The Strategy also recognises opportunities and threats relative to existing transport infrastructure and policy and seeks to address these to benefit the economy.



There are possible local adverse impacts on biodiversity, water quality, geology and soils that may arise from physical development of new infrastructure, although these have been fully addressed within the Strategy itself and the environmental report. Management measures and mitigation have been described where required (See Chapter 7 of Environmental Report and the Draft LTS). Further project level environmental assessment may be required for some of the proposed Action Plans.

MITIGATION

The objective and action plan generation process undertaken for the transport strategy is a key mitigation operation as it identified interventions where significant impacts may result from implementation of the Strategy. Environmental protection has therefore been integrated into the plan making process.

For each Action Plan corresponding mitigation has been suggested to reduce any impacts that may arise from the Strategy. The mitigation proposed will ensure that actions taken forward as part of the Strategy take full account of the mitigation requirements imposed.

MONITORING

Monitoring of a PPS is a key requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. The purpose of monitoring is to ensure that the prediction of impacts was correct for each of the Actions taken through to implementation. It is therefore a process of recording change in the baseline and highlighting any unforeseen issues that may have arisen. A proposed monitoring Framework is provided within the Environmental Report.

NEXT STEPS

- A review will be made on the consultation responses received from the consultation exercise on the LTS and SEA Environmental report
- Modifications to the Local Transport Strategy and Environmental Report will be produced if required.
- The Local Transport Strategy and Environmental Report will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for approval.
- The Local Transport Strategy will be adopted.
- SEA Post Adoption Statement will be issued and Environmental monitoring will be agreed and implemented.



OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

Statutory Consultation with Scottish Ministers

The Environmental Report for the Draft Local Transport Strategy has now been submitted to the SEA Gateway for consideration by the Consultation Authorities.

Public Consultation

The publication of the Environmental Report will be also include a Statutory 8 week period of public consultation when the documents may be inspected at all reasonable hours at the following Moray Council Access Points:

- **Buckie Access Point:** 13 Cluny Square, Buckie, AB56 1AJ
- **Elgin Access Point:** Council Offices, High Street, Elgin, Moray, IV30 1BX
- **Forres Access Point:** Auchernack, High Street, Forres, IV36 1DX
- **Keith Access Point:** The Institute, 138-140 Mid Street, Keith, AB55 5BJ

The documents and response form can also be accessed on-line at the following address:

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_52143.html

The consultation will run from the 30th April 2010 to 25th June 2010.

Any person who wishes to make representations to Moray Council about the Environmental Report or the Draft Local Transport Strategy should make them in writing within the dates above using the online form provided to the Council at:

Email: transport.develop@moray.gov.uk

Completed postal forms and any queries should be directed to:

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