



the *moray* council

# Economic Development Annual Review 2014-15



# 1. Introduction

I am delighted to introduce the Economic Development Annual Review for Moray 2014/2015. This is the first such review, and it represents the achievement of a key objective of mine on taking up post in June this year of providing a regular but comprehensive overview of major Economic Development work ongoing across Council services and in co-operation with community planning partners throughout Moray. This cross –cutting perspective is often difficult to achieve in a governance structure in which the constituent elements of a robust economy such as Planning and Building Control, Education, Housing and Infrastructure are each reported to separate Council committees. Although the reporting period is 14/15, as this is the first report we have viewed this broadly and so have included both some earlier context and also an element of horizon scanning. As the format and content are refined, our focus will sharpen, but setting past performance in the context of future aspirations will always be a legitimate part of this report.

Viewed in hindsight, 2014/15 was an eventful year. One of the Council's economic development priorities – promotion of Moray as the location for a UK Spaceport – was frustrated by the decision of the Ministry of Defence to remove both RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks from any further consideration for operational reasons. In contrast, efforts to promote Buckie Harbour as a base not only for existing businesses to grow but also to attract inward investment for operations and maintenance (O and M) work for the offshore renewables sector have proceeded apace. A Masterplan for the harbour was completed at the start of the year, the old net store was refurbished to provide industrial units and new cargo routes for the transportation of marine gasoil have been developed. O and M work remains an objective which is tantalisingly close and I hope to report positive news on this front in early 2016.

Meantime, regeneration continued in Elgin and Keith, with a Scottish Government sponsored “Charrette” - a series of intensive community planning sessions - being held in Elgin which led to the production of a development masterplan for the town centre. The importance of effective flood risk management was also thrown into relief in August 2014 when Hurricane Bertha hit Moray. Although some areas suffered from unexpected surface water flooding, flood defences across the area were so well developed that an estimated £29 million of damage was avoided.

I hope that readers will find this overview helpful.



Rhona Gunn

3 December 2015

## 2. The Strategic Context

### Moray 2023

“Moray 2023 – a Plan for the Future” was first framed by the Moray Community Planning Partnership in 2014 following the gathering of extensive evidence on key issues across Moray and consultation with local communities. The culmination of that work was agreement of 5 overarching priorities shared by all community planning partners. Of those 5 priorities, sustainable economic development was recognised as the most important as a vibrant economy plays a pivotal role in not only funding many services but also contributing to our mental wellbeing and training and educational opportunities.

In order to measure progress in growing a diverse and sustainable economy, a range of targets were also identified, and for this particular priority, nine targets were agreed ranging from the rate of population growth to wage rates, business start-ups and the percentage of the workforce in the private sector. References to relevant Moray 2023 targets are included at relevant points throughout this report.

### Moray Economic Strategy; Moray Economic Partnership

The Moray Economic Partnership (MEP) Board meets four times per year. Operationally supported by the partnership programme groups, during 2014-15 the partnership advanced various initiatives and projects including but not limited to:

- Reviewed economic targets for inclusion in Moray 2023;
- Co-ordinated media services to promote the work of the partnership and Moray as a place to live, work and visit;
- Adopted the Moray Cultural Strategy;
- Adopted the Regional Skills Investment Plan;
- Supported the development of a bid for a UK Spaceport to be located in Moray;
- Undertook a design charrette for central Elgin;
- Promoted Buckie Harbour as an operations and maintenance centre for offshore wind energy;
- Held the inaugural Moray Business Week;
- Undertook a study to identify and help to promote improvements to the A95.

Additional information is provided in the programme quarterly updates published by the partnership, posted on the MEP page of the Your Moray Community Planning Partnership website <http://yourmoray.org.uk/CPBoard/CPBoardIndex.htm>

The partnership is guided by the objectives and outcomes included in Moray 2023. These draw on the Moray Economic Strategy which was adopted by the Community Planning Board in 2012. A refresh of the strategy is being undertaken to reflect changes since 2012.

The partnership has provided guidance and support for many of the projects contained within this report.

### Moray Council Corporate Plan

The Council's Corporate Plan was framed in 2015 to cover a 3 year period. As well as setting out the corporate vision and values, the Corporate Plan also identifies what the Council as a single agency will be doing over the period from 2015-2017 to contribute towards the wider Moray 2023 plan priorities. In terms of the Council's top priority of sustainable economic development, a range of actions are set out extending from major developments which will have an impact throughout the area such as developing Buckie harbour as an operations and maintenance base for the offshore renewables industry through to more localised initiatives such as the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Regeneration Project. Each action listed in the Corporate Plan is addressed in this review, and this correlation is detailed at section 11 on page 39 below.

### 4 Tiers of Priority

During 2014, officers engaged with Councillors to establish the Council's priorities in the context of Moray 2023. The engagement sorted generic economic development activities into groups with Tier 1 being the highest priority. The results are shown below.

Tier 1	Spaceport, Buckie harbour expansion, maximise external funding on priorities, supporting small & medium sized enterprises (SMEs) through business gateway, promotion of Moray, supporting improved road, rail & air communications, securing broadband and mobile phone networks.
Tier 2	Development by the Council (infrastructure, housing, and industrial); school & further education (Skills Pipeline); youth employment (professional & skilled jobs); vibrant town centres.
Tier 3	Tourism marketing, business support, visitor information & orientation, procurement (supplier development), developing tourist destinations, economic research;
Tier 4	Seed funding for events; community facilities, & infrastructure: (walking trails, bikeways, sports facilities, recreational facilities & cultural facilities); employability; harbour maintenance (except Buckie).

## 3. Inward Investment and Development

Inward investment and development is a critical aspect of sustainable economic growth for Moray. The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out the blueprint for such growth in Moray, establishing policy to promote sustainable economic development, address the environmental and climate change impacts and establish the principles of good design and placemaking. The allocation of land for housing, employment land, retail and commercial activities enables investment decisions and provides certainty in the planning system.

### Local Development Plan

#### i. Transition to new LDP

The new Moray Local Development Plan 2015 was adopted on 31st July 2015, replacing the Moray Structure Plan 2007 and Moray Local Plan 2008. The final stages of preparing the Plan exceeded the target preparation times set out by the Scottish Government, however the Council was recognised in the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning for the approach taken on delivering effective housing land supply. The Plan includes three primary policies on Sustainable Economic Development, Climate Change and Placemaking, reflecting the

national priorities set out in Scottish Planning Policy 2014 and the local priorities set out in Moray 2023.

The Plan also sets out a range of policies against which to assess development proposals, with the aim of directing the right development to the right place and safeguarding Moray's environment. The Plan identifies a generous supply of land for housing and employment development with further reserve supplies available, which can be brought forward if required. Officers continue to promote and facilitate development to support the local economy.

**ii. Development Management - Planning and Building Control  
Housing**



Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) was issued in June 2014 and introduces a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development.

Development Management's primary function is to process planning applications, working with Planning & Development who prepare the Moray Local Plan & Strategies and Building Standards who issue Building Warrants. All services work collaboratively to delivery major projects both public and private in an efficient, streamlined manner which provides certainty for the developer and also achieves the Council's number one priority of Sustainable Economic Development as set out in the Moray Council Corporate Plan 2015-17.

Having an up to date and recently Adopted Moray Local Plan 2015 with associated Supplementary Guidance is essential to dealing with development proposals effectively. All major development proposals and proposals which have significant economic impact are now covered by a processing agreement between the Council and the Developer setting out key milestones over the life of the project (from the pre-application stage through to the signing of a Section 75 legal agreement and discharging planning conditions prior to work commencing on site). Significant work has been carried out on master planning such as that seen for Findrassie and highlights the new approach to working with developers and providing pre-application advice to developers to improve the quality of design in final submissions as well as front loading the planning application process.

The Economic Development & Infrastructure Services Committee agreed on 29 October 2013 to acknowledge that sustainable economic development is the Council's main priority and to note that in assessing the proposals which promote sustainable economic development in Moray, where a planning or roads policy or standard is open to interpretation, the Council and its officers will apply a purposive approach to interpretation with this priority in mind, taking a flexible, pragmatic and proportionate approach and considering alternative solutions whilst safeguarding the aims of the policy/standard.

The Planning Performance Framework (PPF) is submitted annually to the Scottish Government on an annual basis and sets out in detail how Planning & Development Services are contributing to the Council's sustainable economic development priority, this year has seen further improvement in scoring and we anticipate continued improvement in 2016.

Application numbers have remained broadly consistent with previous years and performance has continued to improve with the average time for local applications at 7.8 weeks and housing applications 6.8 weeks which is a significant improvement from 23.1 weeks for local application in 2011/12. The service has completed the task of removing legacy cases from the system, and improved performance for major applications and received an Commendation from the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning for Dalmuach Distillery in Speyside

#### **i. Local Housing Strategy**

On 31 March 2015, the Council completed its programme of investment in new affordable housing for the period of 2012-15. The programme was funded by a resource allocation from the Scottish Government and was based on the investment priorities set out in the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). As at 31 March 2015, the programme had delivered 108 Council house completions with a further 104 houses under construction. The number of completions achieved in 2014/15 was 68, which will contribute to the Moray 2023 target of building 500 Council houses over the next 10 years. During 2014/15, the Council purchased land for a further 56 Council houses.

The total amount spent on new Council housing in the financial year 2014/15, including Scottish Government funding, was £8.727m. This represents a significant investment in an area recognised as a key enabler of economic development. On 18 November 2014, the Council submitted its updated SHIP to the Scottish Government. The SHIP sets out proposals for a programme of investment in 196 new Council houses during the period 2015-18.

## ii. Other Affordable Housing

During 2014/15, 8 households received financial support under the Open Market Shared Equity Scheme to enable them to buy homes in Moray. The scheme is available to people on low and moderate incomes with priority given to first-time buyers, disabled people and members and former members of the armed forces. The Council continued to investigate the potential for providing intermediate tenure affordable housing in Moray, including mid-market rent and low-cost home ownership. Progress was also made on development of the Apply4Homes system - a new system to enable applicants for affordable housing in Moray to register their interest in mid-market rent options.

## iii. Private Sector Build Out

The Council prepares an annual housing land audit and is required by Scottish Planning Policy 2014 to maintain a 5 year supply of effective land (free from constraints) and to ensure there is a generous supply identified in the Local Development Plan. The Council has maintained a 5 year effective supply and manages the land supply through identification of LONG term designations which can be released if a series of "triggers" are met. This allows a quick, responsive and flexible approach to be taken, to support the local house building industry. The Council's approach to managing the housing land supply has been recognised with an award in the annual Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning.

Completion rates for new housing show a steady and stable position since 2009, with the preceding years reflecting the downturn in the economy. Provision of affordable homes continues to help to support the local housebuilding industry in a significant way.

## Commercial

### i. Industrial Portfolio

In 2014/15 the Council completed the development of 6 new business units in Forres and Keith within budget and all were let soon after construction. In addition work started on 2 new units at Burghead. These have subsequently been completed, giving a total of 25 new units (in various locations) having been completed within budget and successfully leased to small businesses since 2010.

In addition, a refurbishment/upgrading programme is ongoing in relation to existing properties, to ensure they remain responsive to future business needs. The provision of 4 additional serviced sites in Keith was also delivered within budget in 2014/15, which will allow businesses to develop their own purpose built premises. European funding has been secured for a number of these development projects.

Occupancy rates remain near capacity and the Council is considering further proposals to expand the portfolio to provide sites and buildings to meet business needs. The Council is seeking to provide further industrial sites in March Road Buckie over the coming year.

**ii. HIE/Forres Enterprise Park**

Over the last twelve months HIE have continued to market the Enterprise Park Forres (EPF) as the premier business park in the North of Scotland. There has continued to be a healthy pipeline of enquiries with a number of bespoke propositions delivered including three for which initial building design work has been carried out. HIE has progressed work from the Masterplan exercise carried out in 2014, commissioning a report to identify the best route forward to secure planning consents for the remaining area of the park. It is intended to proceed with securing planning permission in principle for the remaining area of the park, and detailed planning permission for up to three units. In support of this HIE have carried out detailed site investigation and drainage surveys and detailed design work on bus laybys for the A96.

HIE have sold two buildings (ATOS and SEIL) as per HIE's strategy of not being a long term landlord. HIE are in negotiations with a number of parties who are interested in buildings and plots on the enterprise park and these will continue to be progressed over the next twelve months.

Horizon Scotland continues to be fully let, however Glasgow School of Art will move to their new premises in Q2 of 2016 which it is expected will result in a dip in occupancy. Work is underway to generate a pipeline of new tenants.

### iii. Private Sector - Town Vacancy Rate

Town Centre Health Checks are undertaken biennially to assess the vitality and viability of Moray Town Centres and when used consistently over a period of time as part of a town centre health check, help demonstrate changes in performance that can inform future decision making.

The 2014 health checks highlighted that vacancy levels in Edgar Road, Forres, Keith, Aberlour, Dufftown and Rothes were lower than in 2012, while vacancy rates in Elgin, Lossiemouth, Buckie and Fochabers had increased.

A summary of the 2014 findings is set out in Table below.

Town	Comparison		Convenience		Retail Service		Leisure Service		Vacancy		Vacancy Rate		% of National Multiples	
	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012
Elgin	86	86	18	22	45	46	67	67	39	25	15.3	9.8	34	31
Edgar Road	19	19	2	2	3	3	2	1	5	9	16	30	79	80
Forres	32	32	15	15	20	22	23	23	8	10	8.16	9.8	21	21
Keith	28	29	13	12	9	10	19	18	6	1	8	12.66	12	13.7
Buckie	27	35	7	8	15	17	19	19	11	4	13.92	4.82	30	21
Lossiemouth	12	12	6	7	10	12	16	17	8	6	16	10.1	7.6	8
Aberlour	8	9	4	4	4	5	9	8	0	1	0	3.7	6.25	11
Dufftown	10	8	7	6	5	4	20	20	1	4	2.3	9.5	13.6	16.7
Fochabers	8	9	3	4	3	3	9	8	1	1	4.2	4.0	14.3	14.3
Rothes	5	3	4	4	2	3	9	8	3	3	13	14.3	27	30

## 4. Transport and Infrastructure





### **A96 Dualling**

The Scottish Government has a commitment to dual the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030. The scheme is being promoted by Transport Scotland as Trunk Road Authority. The Moray Council considers the promotion of the A96 corridor vital to the economic development of Moray and this is a target in Moray 2023. The process and key milestones have been outlined to members, and a workshop has been held with members to discuss the broad implications of the dualling proposals as developed so far. The outcomes of this workshop were fed back to Transport Scotland as part of the Stage 1 consultation. Stage 1 is the high level assessment of the pros and cons for various improvement strategies, with no potential routes yet identified. Stage 2 has recently begun for the Nairn to Fochabers section of the route and is expected to conclude in 2018 with identification of route options including a preferred route option. Stage 3 would then include design and assessment of the preferred route option. There will be continued dialogue and representations as the scheme moves into Stage 2 and beyond to promote the needs of The Moray Council

### **WLR**

The Western Link Road is regarded by the Council as a strategic project that will deliver opportunities for economic growth and reduced congestion in Elgin. A crossing over the railway line to the west of Elgin is integral to delivering these outcomes. Following the refusal of planning permission in 2014 the Council has consulted on mitigation measures which will form the basis of a new application to be submitted in January 2016.

### **A95**

The importance to Moray of the A95 between Aviemore and Keith, particularly in its role as a freight corridor has been a focus for the Council. A Route Study in accordance with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance has been carried out, under the leadership of the Moray Economic Partnership, and funded by HITRANS. This report is to be submitted to, and discussed with, Transport Scotland. Moray Economic Partnership will be using the findings

of this report as a platform from which to build a campaign to lobby for improvements to the route.

### **Buckie Harbour**



The Council in partnership with HIE have produced a Buckie Harbour Masterplan providing a long term vision for the harbour. The Council has been in dialogue with MORL to secure Buckie Harbour as an O&M base for offshore renewables in the Moray Firth and has submitted costed proposals to MORL to support its case.

Discussions are ongoing with interested parties to secure a long term future for the Buckie Shipyard.

### **Dial-a-Bus**

Dial M services have seen continued growth throughout the year, with the introduction of some Saturday services. Members have approved the introduction of two additional point-to-point services: a weekly service between Tomintoul and Grantown, and most recently a 3 days per week service from Keith to Tomintoul via Dufftown. This service has been shortlisted for a 2016 COSLA award.

### **Core paths**

Development, improvement and promotion of The Moray Core Paths network has been modest due to competing priorities. Nevertheless progress has been made during 2014/15 as follows:

Moray Walking Festival- the 3<sup>rd</sup> festival used many of the Core paths as walking event locations. The Festival is focussed on raising the profile of 'The Moray Way' (around 80miles of Core Paths in Moray).

Forres- Completion of upgrading of the Core path FR29 from Grantown Road to Pilmuir Road through the Thornhill Housing Scheme to active travel route/safe route to Pilmuir Primary school.

Three upgrade projects in Elgin for paths and cycle paths.

Speyside Way in its entirety from Buckie to Ballindalloch and the spur from Ballindalloch to Glenlivet (Core Paths SW01 to SW05) - Ongoing maintenance and promotion.

Whole Core Paths network-20 new/replacement signs as part of annual Core Paths signage programme

Opportunities are continually being explored to increase the level of community involvement in Core Paths development and maintenance.

### Active Travel



Moray Council continues to promote Active Travel through the development and maintenance of the active travel network and a programme of soft measures to encourage use of the network. During the 2014/15 financial year new routes were built in:

Forres: Pilmuir path linking Pilmuir Primary school and Grant Road, and new shared use route along Grant Road to the new health centre and onward links to the town.

Keith: Turner Street Steps producing an upgraded link between the upper and lower parts of the town.

Buckie: upgrading of the National Cycle Network route 1 (NCN1) along the old railway line between Portessie and Buckie.

Elgin: River Lossie Cycle scheme. Work started to build the new cycle route along the top of the flood relief banks.

Elgin: River Lossie Cycle Track. This scheme utilises a unique opportunity provided by the construction of the Elgin Flood Alleviation Scheme to provide a high quality and safe cycle route from east to west through Elgin avoiding the A96.

Sustrans, through their Community Links Programme, have provided 50% funding for the cycle track with match funding coming from the Elgin Common Good Fund, the River Lossie Trust and Hitrans together with contributions in-kind through the flood alleviation scheme.

Two new pedestrian/cycle bridges are being installed with the Oldmills Bridge over the River Lossie already in place. A new bridge over the Linkwood Burn near Barmuckity is being built using the steel beams from the old Pansport Bridge which was replaced under the flood scheme with the Landshut Bridge.

An extension to the route is also being constructed to create a continuous link between Elgin and Lhanbryde.

Construction is well under way with the route to be open for use in early 2016. A formal opening is planned for March 2016.

Cycle training was offered to all 45 primary schools through the Cycling Scotland Bikeability training programme. In 2014/15 33 schools offered either Bikeability level 1 or 2 to a total of 809 pupils. Moray also participated in Cycling Scotland's Give Me Cycle Space campaign with 7 schools participating. The campaign included cycle rides and route planning, incentives to cycle to school, national and regional media campaigns and cycle shows at each school as well as cycle maintenance training. Schools were also encouraged to work on their school travel plans and to take part in school travel plan activities to encourage more active travel to/from school.

Officers have pursued bids for funding at every opportunity, with successful bids to Sustrans, ERDF and Cycling Scotland in 2014/15. In addition all opportunities are pursued to include walking and cycling routes in new developments through the planning process and developer contributions so as to increase the active travel network and provide residents with options for how they travel.

### **Bus Investment Fund**

Moray's Bus Investment Fund supported bus services form a two year project, supported by the authority, Stagecoach North Scotland, HiTrans and Transport Scotland. The services were launched in April 2015 under the Urban Freedom Health Cycle banner. Key elements see

- An hourly bus service linking Elgin, Kinloss, Findhorn and Forres, extending into the new Forres medical Centre.
- An hourly Sunday bus service linking Elgin, Duffus, Hopeman and Burghead.
- Cycle racks fitted to buses on these services promoting a healthy alternative to short journey car usage.
- Enhanced bus shelter provision around Kinloss and Findhorn.

The ability to access regular public transport into Forres medical centre is a warmly welcomed benefit to many residents from Kinloss and Findhorn. In recent months, the service has seen passenger growth of around 27 percent.

### **Broadband (connectivity and speeds)**

Moray is at the front end of the rollout of superfast broadband across the Highlands and Islands. It is part of the wider Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) programme.

The programme aims to cover a minimum of 75% of premises in all seven Local Authority areas and reach at least 84% of premises in the region. The total project cost is £146m of which £127m is public funding from UK and Scottish Governments and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). The programme is being delivered under contract by BT, overseen by HIE (Digital Highlands and Islands – DigitalHI). Phase 1 roll out of infrastructure is projected to be complete at the end of 2016 with a further phase currently being developed.

By the end of 2016 some 93% of premises in Moray are expected to be connected, with the target in Moray 2023 of a further 2% of the hardest to reach premises having access by 2023. As of August 2015 around 70% of premises across Moray were connected to fibre broadband infrastructure, which is by far the highest coverage level in any of the Highlands and Islands Local Authority areas. The programme has reached over 23,500 premises. Take up as of August 2015 stands at around 20% of those premises covered by the programme.

### **Community Transport**

The principal focus of community transport is to minimise social exclusion and provide access to services (particularly healthcare) for people with no other form of transport, living in areas without robust public transport facilities. The Transport Steering Group of Moray Forum is taking a leading role in encouraging and growing community transport across the area. Early activities include establishing community forums and training programmes. The Steering Group is now looking at tailored support to enable community transport groups to grow their service offering in parallel with council funded services.

### **Rail and Air**

Transport Scotland have recognised the need for improvements to the rail network in north-east Scotland, with the Aberdeen-Inverness route having seen significant growth in passenger numbers over recent years. Despite this growth the timetable and network capacity has not changed in many years. Network Rail, the rail infrastructure provider, has been funded to make improvements between Aberdeen and Inverness. In the long term, this will allow an hourly all day timetable, and half-hourly peak services between Elgin and Inverness. A new station close to Inverness Airport is also included in the suite of improvements. To achieve this, a number of interventions are planned over the next 4 years, including the relocation of Forres station onto straight track, the re-control of signalling to Inverness, and the replacement of the level crossing in Elgin.

In relation to air travel, HITRANS is the lead partner on a European funded project aimed at helping remote communities develop their economic, social and environmental potential. The project will include work on innovative technologies to improve airport performance and control cost, fostering more sustainable energy use, and exploring the role of airports as employment hubs. The Moray Council will have input to this project through its membership of HITRANS. Amidst this ongoing work, the reintroduction of daily flights from Inverness to Heathrow from 2016 and the extended connectivity which these bring is a major development and will provide a significant boost to the economy across the Highlands and Islands including Moray.

### **Other Roads and Bridges**

The A941 Lossiemouth – Elgin – Rothes road is a major link to the A95 (see A95 study above) and suffers from congestion at its railway crossing in Elgin which continues to present a limitation on development. The Council is funding studies to consider how best to deal with current and predicted future pressures including the road bridge at the River Spey immediately before joining the A95.

Traffic on the A96 trunk road splits 50/50 at the A96/A98 junction. The A98 will become increasingly important as Buckie Harbour is developed. Associated feeder roads from

Buckie and from the A98 south to Keith (B9016) will see increased traffic. A road improvement scheme was implemented on the B9016 in recent years and design is proceeding on further improvements.

Any development which results in significant increases in traffic volume or size (construction or permanent) will impact on local roads and bridges, e.g. distillery expansion, forest timber transport, housing developments or rural smaller scale development. Where reasonable and within planning guidelines, developers are asked to fund mitigation measures.

### **Timber Transport**

Commercial Forestry now covers 14% of Scotland and that is forecast to increase with investment in downstream processing to match, including in Moray. In excess of £200m worth of processed timber products are driven down the A9 every year.

Problems can arise in getting timber from the forest to the processors or biomass users. Over 3 million tonnes of timber is forecast to be taken from forests on Moray's roads in the next 15 years. A study recently conducted shows that some of this timber will have to travel over public roads which are not suitable for the quantities involved.

According to the Timber Transport Forum, the ceiling price for sawn timber is fixed by the European/Scandinavian market, at the price they can provide sawn timber to the construction trade in England. This limits the industry's capacity to contribute to local authority road improvements which is perhaps why, for the last ten years, the Scottish Government has provided a Strategic Timber Transport Fund of £3m/ to help address timber transport issues.

It is not yet known whether that fund will be renewed when the current round of funding ceases in March 2016. The Council will consider these issues as part of its asset management planning process.

Timber transport is a particular kind of freight transport. Transport of general freight by large goods vehicles, whether into distilleries or farms or construction sites etc. can equally affect the condition of our public roads network. This can be anticipated for larger developments that go the planning process and it is sometimes possible to get a contribution from developers to mitigate against damage. Sometimes legitimate use of public roads, for example by farmers taking delivery of pot ale to act as a fertiliser, severely test road condition. There is no recourse to this in the long term as imposition of weight limits, for example, can usually only be temporary unless alternative routes exist.

## **5. Employment**

### **Employability in Moray**

Employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work. In simple terms, employability can be defined as the sets of skills, understandings and personal attributes necessary to gain, sustain and progress further in employment.

In Moray a Local Employability Partnership has established a multi-agency body, the Moray Employability Action Group, to support local organisations to develop a coordinated approach to employability and training that meets the expressed needs of the people of Moray. The Moray Employability Action Group is accountable via the Moray Economic Partnership to the Moray Community Planning Board.

The Moray Economic Partnership works closely with the Employability Action Group and has established a Skills and Training group to look at employability from a local economic

perspective. This Skills and Training group leads and coordinates the plans, actions, and projects which will provide the skills, training and educational requirements that support the delivery of the Moray Economic Strategy.

### **Youth Employment Moray Project**

Local businesses received a 50% grant for 6 months, based on minimum wage rates, for employing a young person who had been unemployed for less than 6 months.

Since this project started June 2013, 103 young people (age 16 to 29) have found jobs in 69 different companies in Moray.

### **Activity Agreements**

57 young people participated in Activity Agreements from April 2014-April 2015. The Activity Agreement service has been further developed to include a wider range of activities for harder to reach unemployed young people. The majority of referrals have come from Skills Development Scotland, Throughcare and Aftercare and Employment Support Services. Activity Agreements are for young people who are identified at stage 1 of the employability pipeline.

### **Participation Measure (16 Plus Data Hub)**

A range of local partnership organisations within the Employability Action Group have been involved in the development of this new youth employability data measure. The new measure of participation will allow employability partners to analyse real time information from the data hub and ensure post-16 transition planning processes in school and post school are in place. In particular, these will focus on vulnerable young people including those leaving care, with disabilities and additional support needs.

### **Developing Young Workforce in Moray**

Local employability strategic partnership groups have been working together to discuss the employability landscape in Moray and agree on how Moray responds to the recommendations within the Developing Young Workforce National strategy. The recommendation is that regional groups will be industry led and in Moray it is now proposed that the Moray Chamber of Commerce will oversee and manage the Developing Young Workforce in Moray regional group.

### **Employment Land**

The Local Development Plan provides a range of existing and new sites for employment purposes, from general industrial land through to high amenity Business Parks. Whilst employment land supply is not a statistical indicator within Moray 2023 land supply is key to achieving the outcomes including providing quality accommodation, increasing business start ups, attracting inward investment, and growing employment opportunities in areas of key strength or emerging opportunities. Officers are working to facilitate sites and address any site constraints to ensure sites are marketable and effective during the period of the Local Development Plan.

The Council monitors the supply of employment land through an annual audit, with the 2015 audit highlighting that;

- \* the number of sites and area in the established supply in Elgin has dropped since 2014, largely due to a re-measurement of sites and better understanding of the net area available). The effective supply in Elgin is however affected by constraints at the planned Barmuckity Business Park. Officers from the Council and HIE are working together to develop a project plan for development of this site which is recognised as essential to economic growth in Elgin and the surrounding area.

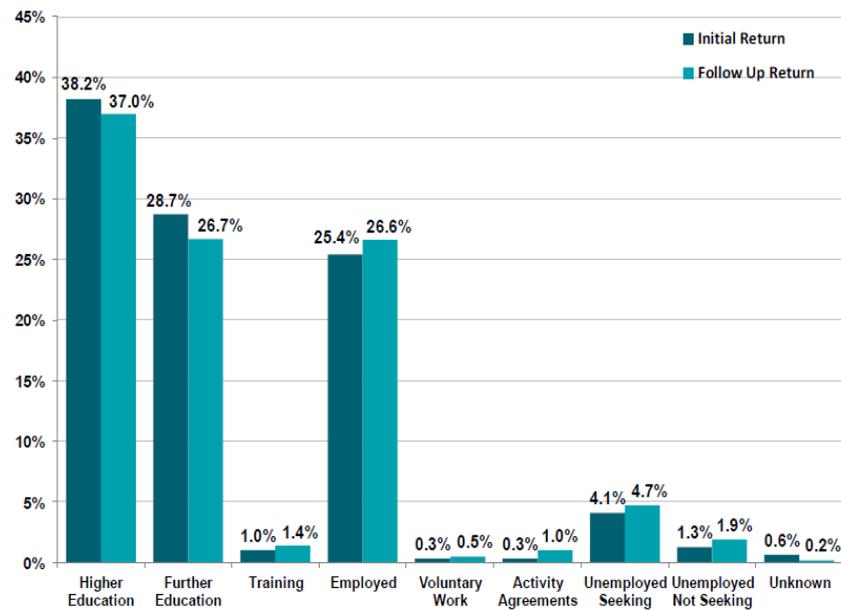
- \* In Forres there has been a drop since 2014 in the established supply following completion of development at Waterford

\* the established supply in Keith, Buckie and Lossiemouth has remained constant since 2014.

\* there has been an increase in the established supply in the Rest of Moray due to the introduction of sites at Bluehill Craigellachie, Mosstodloch and Malcolmburn.

### Positive Destinations

In June 2015, Skills Development Scotland published the Community Planning Partnership Report for Moray Council and this report provided the results of the School Leaver Destination return (2013/2014). Skills Development Scotland (SDS) supplies information on the destinations of school leavers (SLDR), at an individual level, to the Scottish Government's Analytical Services Unit (Schools). This return is based on a follow up of young people who left school between 11 August 2013 and 31 July 2014. The initial exercise was carried out during the months of September/October 2014. Local SDS teams have liaised closely with Local Authorities to ensure a robust cohort of leavers has been identified. In March 2015, SDS followed up the same cohort to determine if there had been any change in their circumstances. The percentage of leavers from Moray Council reported in a positive destination in March 2015 was 1.7% (pp) higher than the national average. The proportion of leavers who were in a positive destination in October 2014 was 93.9% and the follow up survey in March 2015 revealed that this had only fallen by 0.7 percentage points (pp) to 93.2. The graph below shows the comparison between initial and follow up destinations:



Senior phase and 16 plus transition planning processes within all 8 Secondary Schools and Pinefield Parc continue to be supported. The Schools will be able to use Insight Reports to look at their individual school leavers destinations and this data is obtained from the new 16 plus Data Hub. The participation measure will replace the School Leaver Destination Return (SLDR) from August 2015 and includes tracking young people from the age of 16-19 years.

### The Moray Skills and Training Pipeline

Most organisations in Scotland recognise the Strategic Skills Pipeline model, which has been developed as a framework to support the effective delivery of employability services.

The Moray Skills and Training Pipeline in line with recommendations is divided into 5 distinct stages that support the employability journey. The 5 stages provide a map for the job seekers journey and also provide the job seeker with information at each stage on local

organisations that can support them to progress through the stage and on towards employment.

The Skills and Training pipeline aims to promote progress, moving the individual from not being job ready to job ready and on to aftercare, supporting the person to sustain their employment. However, although the pipeline is set out in stages people do not have to go through each stage and may dip in and out at various stages to find the right organisation that can help them to progress in to and sustain employment.

Skills Development Scotland reported a breakdown by Stage and Local Authority Area Period from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015 (Operating Year) for the Employability Fund training provision. The employability fund provision provides training in Moray for clients who require provision at stage 2-4 of the employability pipeline. There was a total of 139 starts, 22 at Stage 2, 54 at Stage 3 and 63 at Stage 4.

The table below is taken from the Skills Development Scotland Moray Council Community Planning Report (June 2015) and highlights the proportion of school leavers who were in a positive destination from Moray Council's mainstream secondary schools. The proportion of leavers who were in a positive destination in October 2014 was 93.9% and in the March 2015 follow up survey it was 93.2%.

**Table 1: SLDR 2013/14 Initial & Follow up return in comparison to Scotland**

Destinations	Scotland			Moray Council		
	Initial (%)	Follow Up (%)	% point change	Initial (%)	Follow Up (%)	% point change
Higher Education	38.6	37.9	-0.7	38.2	37.0	-1.2
Further Education	26.3	24.5	-1.8	28.7	26.7	-2.0
Training	4.1	2.6	-1.5	1	1.4	0.4
Employment	21.7	25.3	3.6	25.4	26.6	1.2
Voluntary Work	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.5	0.2
Activity Agreement	1.1	0.7	-0.4	0.3	1.0	0.7
Unemployed Seeking	6.3	6.7	0.4	4.1	4.7	0.6
Unemployed Not Seeking	1.1	1.5	0.4	1.3	1.9	0.6
Unknown	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.2	-0.4
<b>Positive Destinations</b>	<b>92.3</b>	<b>91.5</b>	<b>-0.8</b>	<b>93.9</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>-0.7</b>
<b>Total Leavers</b>	<b>51,876</b>	<b>51,708</b>		<b>989</b>	<b>983</b>	

Please note that percentages may not total 100% due to rounding

### Employability Fund Training Providers

There are currently 5 providers delivering training provision from stage 3-5 on the pipeline. The organisations are Lifeskills, Barnardos, Moray Training, Workingrite and Moray College.

### Procurement

Activities to help promote economic development in this area include:

April 2014 – Meet the buyer event with an emphasis on Public Contract Scotland (PCS) registration. Over 300 suppliers attended this successful event.

September 2014 - SME Strategy completed reaffirming the link with Economic Development colleagues and Business Gateway and formalising communication to ensure our development activities are aligned and not duplicated.

November 2015 – Supplier Finance launch. The programme gives Council suppliers the opportunity to take payment of their invoices ahead of the usual payment date.

Throughout the year officers have organised a number of supplier roadshows and surgeries for specific contract opportunities. These meetings are used to inform the market of the proposed requirement and the process the Council has to follow to advertise, tender and evaluate. Popular and extremely productive, the Council will continue to hold these events as and when contracts arise for procurement.

All the Council's contract opportunities are advertised on PCS giving access to all registered suppliers to Council business - [publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk](http://publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk)

## 6. Business Support

Business Gateway was introduced to Moray in April 2009 and is managed through a Joint services agreement between Moray and Highland Councils.

During the year 2014/2015:

- **121** new businesses were supported to start-up with one-to-one advice
- **33** start-up workshops were delivered with 257 attendees
- **30** workshops for growing businesses were delivered with 318 attendees
- **22** businesses with growth potential were supported to develop and grow
- **163** businesses were supported with specialist recruitment advice and 83 new jobs created in conjunction with Youth Employment Scotland funding.
- **8** digital ready workshops delivered in partnership with HIE with 80 attendees
- **56** businesses received sector specific advice from industry specialists
- An additional **8** events were delivered locally on such topics as Auto Enrolment; Crowdfunding and Access to Finance.

Growing businesses seeking to become investor ready and those start-ups looking to borrow funds were also supported by Business Gateway. Direct interventions resulted in this support leveraging £1.5m of secured loans into the local Moray economy.

In November 2014, Business Gateway instigated the inaugural and successful Moray Business Week attracting 618 growing businesses to a series of events & workshops. Consistently higher than average survivability rates with 83% of starts ups assisted still trading at 12 months and 78% of start-ups assisted still trading after 3 years compared to the national average of 72%. Growing the 5 year start-up survival rate from 55% to 61 % is one of the measures included in Moray 2023.

Business Gateway Moray consistently performs above the national average in independent quality assurance surveys for customer satisfaction — during 2014/15 overall satisfaction where service delivery exceeded customer expectation was 97%.

The Scottish Business Pledge is a Scottish Government initiative encouraging businesses to sign a 3 part pledge.

1. That all of their employees, except apprentices and those under 18, are paid the living wage.\*
2. Choose at least two other pledge elements the business is already delivering. These are:
  - a. Not using exploitative zero hours contracts
  - b. Support workforce engagement & development

- c. Invest In youth
- d. Gender balance & diversity
- e. Innovation
- f. International business
- g. Involved with community
- h. Prompt invoice payments

3. Commit to working on the other pledges (a to h)

The pledge is voluntary. Businesses can display the logo if they have made the pledge. The Moray Council involvement is via Business Gateway (BG) Moray which offers assistance to businesses to help them make the pledge.

BG Moray and Highlands & Islands Moray office have been bringing up the subject as part of their regular company growth relationships, but the challenges associated with meeting the pledge requirements in a rural economy are recognised.

For more information <https://scottishbusinesspledge.scot/>

\* (Note that this refers to the Living Wage Foundation rate, currently £7.85. This is different to the UK Government new proposed National Living Wage which is to be introduced on 1 April 2016 at £7.20.)

### Elgin Business Improvement District (BID)



Business Improvement Districts are business led partnerships which are created through a ballot process to deliver additional services. They can be a powerful tool for directly involving local businesses in local activities and allow the business community and local authorities to work together to improve the local trading environment.

The City of Elgin Business Improvement District (BID) was first launched in 2009 and was renewed in 2014. Following consultation and research, resulting in a successful Yes vote, Elgin BID will continue to deliver the various themes set out in their business plan for a further five years and work in partnership towards creating a vibrant city centre.

During 2014/15 work included;

- 6 events were hosted including the third BID Business Awards resulting in more than 2000 votes being casted by members of the public.
- Development of a new Web Site is underway and the creation of the new Digital Food & Drink Guide.
- Partnership working with the Elgin Benevolent Trust has replaced all the Christmas Lights across the city centre.
- With the support of the Moray Council the “Free After 3.00pm” parking initiative has allowed to offer free parking in 2 of the city centre car parks.

## 7. Social Enterprise

### **Economic Development (Social Enterprises) 2015**

Moray has seen growth in support to a number of social enterprises over the last year and the Council's support of Community Asset Transfers (CAT) will provide a basis for significant growth in Moray of social enterprises e.g. Moravia, Forres Tollbooth, the Inkwell Elgin Youth café, and Out of Darkness Theatre. There is support given by the Council's Community Support Unit (CSU) to groups developing a business plan.

Social enterprise activity is a vibrant and growing sector in Moray which was recognised in a Social Enterprise awards ceremony held at HIE in Forres on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September. Approx. 63 attended the event where, as well as receiving recognition for all the hard work they do, participants also heard from inspirational key note speakers from the sector and took part in workshops which provided them with thoughts and practical information which they could take back to their organisations.

Social enterprise is being supported and promoted in Moray in many forms:

**tsiMORAY training programme:** a full training programme is currently being delivered where Social Entrepreneurs can receive free training in areas including budgeting, employment law, procurement and governance. Social accounting & audit training is very successful. There is also a monthly drop in where either a start-up group or existing organisation can drop in for individual advice.

**Peer Support Groups:** Social Enterprise Network Meetings take place every 2 months, Magic Moment meetings take place regularly as a follow up to social accounting training and Peer Support visits are set up on an annual basis.

**New Starts:** Support has been provided to approx. 10 – 12 individuals/groups interested in setting up the social enterprise model.

**Existing Social Enterprises:** As well as group/peer support, individual support and advice has been provided to many existing groups and organisations including: Keith & Dufftown Railway, Joyful Noise, Friendly Access, Findhorn Rowing Club, Transition Town Forres, Earthtime, Community Food Moray, VIP Childcare, Elgin Youth Development Group, Forres Area Credit Union, Moray Reach Out, Ray's Opportunities and many others.

**Social Enterprise and Tourism:** A new network was recently set up and will continue to develop this area.

**Social Enterprise and Young People:** Forres Academy delivered as part of the business curriculum an Introduction to Social Enterprise (delivered to approx. 120 pupils). They also attended an Elgin High School event to support a group of pupils who have set up a social enterprise. TSI also attended the career fairs in November to raise awareness with young people as to what social enterprise is.

### **Moray LEADER Programme 2007-2014**

LEADER is a bottom up rural development programme based on EC funding which aims to improve the quality of life and economic prosperity in rural communities through locally driven rural development initiatives and projects. The 2009-2013 programme was drawn to a close in 2014/15.

The main aim of LEADER is to increase the capacity of local rural community and business networks to build knowledge and skills, innovate and co-operate in order to tackle local development objectives.

Moray was allocated £2,340,000 of LEADER funds and this was matched with £460,000 of Council funds.

### Themes, targets & priorities

The themes which LEADER in Moray focused on were:

- Sustainable Communities
- Sustainable Energy
- Innovative Value Added Products and Markets
- Sustainable Tourism Development
- Innovative Micro Enterprise
- Versatile Rural Workforce

### Summary for the whole programme

Applications received	128
Awards made	98
Projects which completed	84
Total LEADER funds awarded	£2,066,515
Number of claims processed	454
Total LEADER funds paid out	£1,921,825
Additional funds leveraged	£3,555,055

### Outcomes

Jobs created - 174

Jobs safeguarded - 51

Numbers who benefitted from projects - 203,835



## European Fisheries Fund Axis 4



Since April 2012 Moray European Fisheries Fund (MEFF) Axis 4 programme has provided investment opportunities to the local fisheries community to create new and sustainable sources of income in the coastal area from Cullen to Burghead. The Moray Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) committee is made up of representatives from the coastal communities and public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

The programme is now closed for applications. During the past three years it has seen many applications out of which 21 were successful; investing approximately £1.2 million into the local fisheries, aquaculture and tourism sector.

Projects ran from a joint seafood initiative lead by the Moray Firth Partnership, new and upgraded fishing heritage facilities in Burghead, Lossiemouth, Buckie; a remote underwater vehicle to a new small boat repair & sailing school in Cullen. For more details, please visit [www.morayfisheriesfund.co.uk](http://www.morayfisheriesfund.co.uk)

### **Future European Funding**

The Economic Development team have been working on securing European funding for two European funded projects.

An Employability project would see a range of schemes put in place to help move people, who face multiple barriers to work, into work. Examples would include work placements at local businesses; career support and advice for lone parents and for those with mental health issues; work placements for young care leavers; training courses for workless people wanting to work in social enterprises; and training courses for workless people who want to set up their own business. This three year scheme would aim to help more than 400 workless people move into work over a three year period. The project would start in 2016.

A Poverty & Social Inclusion project would help to train new childminders and provide more childcare places in Moray. It would also seek to provide finance and debt management

advice to people in Moray at risk of debt. This project would also start in 2016 if funding is secured.

### **Rural Action Plan for Moray – European Funding**

£1,237,000 of European Regional Development Fund monies was secured by Moray Council to take forward a range of capital build projects across Moray aimed at improving the local economy and creating jobs.

This includes a) create new business sites in and around Forres, Elgin, Keith and Buckie; b) green transport infrastructure (such as cycle paths and walkways) in Keith, Buckie and Forres; c) newly developed learning centres within the libraries of Forres and Buckie.

The projects aim to create 123 jobs and support 26 local companies. The capital build for the projects is now fully complete, with the projects all now open. The Council will continue to monitor the success of this project over the coming years.

### **Knockando Woolmill**

The long-term future of one of the last surviving district woollen mill has been secured after completion of the over £3.5 million restoration project, securing the continuing textile production and providing a unique visitor experience. The result of the project so far is that it created 5 full-time, 5 part-time and 12 seasonal jobs, 3 Historic Scotland Craft fellows and won several RICS awards.

### **Tomintoul and Glenlivet**

Tomintoul and Glenlivet Regeneration Plan: The Moray Council is a partner with the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) funding support for the implementation of the Tomintoul and Glenlivet Regeneration Plan. The regeneration plan is making improvements to community infrastructure and supporting community capacity building for a sustainable future with aspects of the programme touching a number of the Council's priorities including access to broadband and developing visitor destinations. Since 2012 Council funding has been used to provide support for projects including improvements to the youth hostel and a broadband pilot scheme and for the employment of a Community Development Officer to support the Community Development Trust that was established as part of the regeneration programme. The programme has been successful in engaging the community in the regeneration of the area, with music events, cycling event and partnering with the Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival. Most notably as part of major regeneration project phase 1 approval has been achieved from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Landscape Partnership Programme scheduled for implementation 2016-17 to 2019-20. In 2014, this Council agreed to be a full partner in the Landscape Partnership Programme, contributing £50,000 per annum. In 2015 the Council also agreed to continue funding support for the Community Development Trust until the end of 2018.

## **8. Education and Social Cohesion**

### **Sustainable Education**

Since the Sustainable Education Review was published, a number of significant developments have been undertaken in relation to providing sustainable models of education for young people in Moray. This has included the development of draft policies on sustainability (known as "Schools for the Future"), leadership and management arrangements in primary schools and school admissions. In addition to this, significant work on school zoning has been undertaken in Elgin due to on-going capacity issues. These policies are currently being worked on and public and parental information meetings have been held as well as briefings for Head Teachers. It is hoped that the school admissions

policy and zoning changes can be enacted from January 2016 with the “Schools for the Future” policy being trialled in late 2015 prior to any amendments being made.

At present, we are refurbishing four of our largest primary schools and in addition to this, we are ready to start work on a replacement secondary school for Elgin High School. This is in addition to on-going capital work to bring all our schools up to an acceptable standard. We constantly review our estate and seek out opportunities for funding etc to ensure we provide the best possible learning provision for the young people of Moray.”

### **Reducing Inequalities -**

Work has been undertaken in relation to the development of a Prevention Plan for Moray. This remains in the early stages, but the Children’s Wellbeing Service is currently planning some restructuring which will allow a greater focus on individual areas within Moray where resources can be targeted at children and families who are most in need. This work will be led by local multi agency Locality Management Groups (LMGs) and will have a key role to play in improving outcomes and reducing inequalities.

### **Age Demographics**

Moray has a population of around 93k, 21% between 0-17, 15% between 18-30, 46% aged between 31-64 and 18% over the age of 65. The growth in the number of older people compared to economically active younger people is recognised as a major challenge for Scotland, and in Moray the proportion of the population that is 65+ is growing faster than the rest of Scotland as a whole. Older people have a lot to contribute to their communities and there is a significant shift occurring in relation to this group being seen as contributors rather than focussing on the additional support some older people require. Life expectancy in Moray is above the national average and generally a longer period is spent in better health. Age demographics have been used in a number of research activities during the period to inform strategic planning.

### **Community Safety**



**COMMUNITY SAFETY  
PARTNERSHIP MORAY**

During 2014/15, the Community Safety Partnership continued its work to ensure that Moray remains a safe place to live and do business. The Partnership was strengthened by the introduction of a Community Safety Hub. This hub encourages greater information sharing and joint working between agencies including Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, NHS, Moray Alcohol and Drug Partnership, Registered Social Landlords and several Moray Council departments including Housing, Adult and Child Protection and Trading Standards. The close working between Partners helps in early identification and intervention on Community Safety problems. Significant reductions have been recorded in relation to Noise Complaints, Drinking in Public, Rowdy Behaviour and Incidents of litter dropping. Joint initiatives are undertaken by the partners to tackle underage drinking, anti social behaviour and provide safer streets.

Improvements have also been made within Fire Safety with sustained focus on prevention. The Hub has allowed the Fire Service to work with partner agencies to address issues within a number of vulnerable households in the area. In conjunction with Aberdeenshire Council, a Road Safety Education Officer was appointed with the aim of promoting an early years approach to Road Safety in Moray.

## 9. Natural and Historic Environment

### Flood Risk Management





The year saw completion of the Forres (River Findhorn & Pilmuir) Scheme with the Elgin Scheme very near completion on time and below budget just as, in August 2014, Hurricane Bertha paid a visit bringing extensive rainfall.

Moray's flood schemes protected Lhanbryde, Rothes, Forres and Elgin – over 1,000 homes. Nevertheless surface water flooding was widespread and Dallas was flooded due to extraordinary local conditions.

The Council commissioned flood studies in Dallas, Hopeman, Arradoul and Portessie to see what might be done to reduce risk.

Meanwhile, working with SEPA, Scottish Water and neighbours, a major flood risk assessment identified the most vulnerable areas and actions to reduce risk. This means studies at Portgordon and Seatown, Lossiemouth, and building Newmill Phase 2 flood scheme. The Council also will maintain flood schemes, watercourses and coastal defences.

There is a national recognition that responsibility firstly lies with owners and occupants. People can help protect themselves and be prepared in case they flood, and the Council will help raise awareness of what can be done. Local policies have recently been reviewed to clarify how the Council will support owners and occupants including a policy on the supply of sandbags

#### **Regeneration – CARS; Charrette**

Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS) have been developed in close partnership working with the local community to provide physical improvements to priority buildings, grants for repairs & shop-front improvements, raise awareness and skills through seminars, training & apprenticeships.

The Elgin Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme, (CARS) was launched on 13 August 2013 and runs for a period of five years. The £3.3 million scheme is overseen by a Management Group which includes Elgin Bid, Elgin Fund, Elgin Benevolent Trust, Moray College UHI and Local Councillors. The scheme supports regeneration in the town centre by offering grants to building owners and occupiers for the identified buildings and closes, other traditional buildings in need of repair and for shop front improvements as well as public realm improvements. The CARS Project Officer works closely with the Listed Building & Conservation Planning Officer in Development Management and Building Standards Officers to ensure a joined approach to securing improvements in the town centre.

To date, Elgin CARS has awarded £413,117 towards 18 properties in need of building repair works costing £927,327. A further 30 properties registered for a 'health check' and the funded surveys reveal that much work, in particular at high level, needs to be done. A number of these buildings are 'priority projects' for CARS and all owners will be urged to take action with the help of a grant. Preparation work to improve Elgin's closes has started and physical works will begin over the coming months. Dr Lindsay Lennie (historic shopfront expert) carried out an appraisal of Elgin's surviving Edwardian, Victorian and inter-war shopfronts. All 20 shopfronts have special features typical of their era with the bronze detailing on Burton's being a very rare example in Scotland. The CARS funded training programme draws to a close and has proved to be very popular, especially with building professionals responsible for specification. For more details, please visit [www.elgincars.org.uk](http://www.elgincars.org.uk)

The Keith Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) is a major heritage led project within the town centre of Keith which provides a range of grants to help repair buildings. This project is due to be completed in March 2016 and will have benefitted from around £2 million of investment in the heart of the Conservation Area.

**The Keith Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme** (CARS) is a major heritage led project within the town centre of Keith which provides a range of grants to help repair buildings. This project is due to be completed in March 2016 and will have benefitted from around £2 million of investment in the heart of the Conservation Area.

Keith CARS has made 13 grant awards totalling £398,289 towards external building repair works in the conservation area totalling £844,042. One more project is expected to go ahead before the end of the CARS in March 2016 which will see the entire budget spent.

Of the four originally identified 'priority' projects, CARS grant funded the repair of two, including the ongoing key project at the entrance to Mid Street, a derelict group of buildings that had been disused for around 12 years which was seen as a major target for the regeneration of the area. A further one of these priority projects has been redeveloped independently of CARS funding.

CARS projects have seen long-term disused residential and retail spaces brought back into use which otherwise would still be empty and derelict but for grant funding. The 'Pop-Up Shop' project in the town has proved to be an extremely popular and successful method of attracting start up business to Mid Street and finding uses for empty retail spaces. So far 23 separate businesses have taken advantage of using the shop, 3 being successful enough to go on to open their own shops on Mid Street, bringing another 3 empty shops back into use and helping Mid Street move from having one of the worst shop vacancy rates in Moray to one of the best.

In addition to this, a twelve month program of training courses for contractors, conservation professionals and homeowners came to an end in November 2015. Courses were all very well attended and received overwhelmingly good feedback. In total, the CARS has helped to invest over one million pounds into the Mid Street conservation area since its launch in 2012.





## Elgin Town Centre Regeneration



In November 2014 the Scottish Government selected central Elgin for a major public design Charrette, as part of its Charrette Mainstreaming Programme. The fundamental aim was to involve local residents, business and stakeholders in planning the future of Central Elgin. A number of community and economic development policy documents have established the policy context for the Public Design Charrette such as 'Elgin City For The Future' (2011) and 'The Moray Economic Strategy' (2012), commissioned by The Moray Economic Partnership. These documents were key reference points for a Mini Charrette commissioned by The Moray Economic Partnership and Scottish Government, which was published as 'The Elgin City Centre Masterplan Mini Charrette' (2014) and a key reference point for the Central Elgin Regeneration: Public Design Charrette (2015).

The vision derived from the Public Design Charrette includes the objective that Elgin has a "city centre for living with a wide choice of residential and visitor accommodation", and the associated Action Plan has four themes, one of which is "Diversifying Uses". Projects identified for delivering these objectives include "City Centre Living: More Choice Residential & Visitor Accommodation", and "Target Vacant & Underused Space & Difficult Sites: Ground and Upper Floors".

A key conclusion of the Central Elgin Regeneration: Public Design Charrette is that in reflecting the realities of the current property market, the delivery of priority projects will typically involve a number of sectors, funders and funding sources and will need to have resources focussed on their delivery. An Elgin Action Plan with 12 Priority Projects covering a range of initiatives which have been identified and agreed by the Economic, Development & Infrastructure Committee to be implemented over a 12 month period.

## Elgin Town Centre Action Plan/Re-use of Vacant ground and First Floor Buildings in Elgin Town Centre



Two of the Action Plan Projects agreed to be prioritised from the Elgin Charrette focus on Regeneration & Re-use of both vacant ground and first floor Buildings in Elgin Town Centre. The prime objection is to carry out an audit, work in partnership with the Elgin CARS Officer, Planning & Building Standards Officers, Elgin Bid, Owners and Tenants to actively facilitate the re-use of these assets which when occupied contribute positively to the vitality of the town centre. A Project Officer has been dedicated to leading this task for a 12 month period. The derelict building 184/188 High Street has been identified as a priority project and development proposals are anticipated to be submitted in 2016.

### Waste Management

**Service Provision:** Full kerbside collection service provision is now available to all houses in Moray and being utilised effectively by most residents. Ongoing success can be seen by the increased recycling rate.

**Performance:** The recycling rate for 2014/15 was 55.4% compared to just under 52% for 2013/14 and the first quarter results for this year show an improvement of 3% over the same period last year. The current national average in Scotland is around 42%.

**Satisfaction:** Citizens Panel Surveys indicate that residents in the main are satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided of collection, street sweeping, recycling centres, public toilets.

**Future Strategy:** There is ongoing meetings/liaison with colleagues in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City with a view to progressing a joint Energy from Waste facility in Aberdeen to be operational in 2021. With a view to diverting more waste from landfill in the intervening period and to reducing eventual gate fees at the Joint Waste Facility, the Intervention

Campaign is moving on apace. One of the main current activities is the production and performance of a play by the local Out of Darkness Theatre Company to schools in Moray.

Increased waste handling facilities and consolidation of depots has also been approved which will future proof waste transfer post 2020 when Nether Dallachy landfill site is intended to close.

### **Energy and Climate Change**



Within the recently adopted Moray Local Development Plan 2015, Climate Change is identified as one of the key policies. Since July 2015 all new developments of over 10 houses and buildings in excess of 500 sq. m have had to demonstrate actions taken to address climate change. Developers must evidence energy and resource efficiency, promotion of active travel and public transport, creation of quality green spaces and use of sustainable use of materials. In doing so, new development within Moray is actively contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Cairngorms National Park**

The Cairngorm Economic Strategy was launched in Oct 2015 with the aim of growing the economy of the park by strengthening existing business sectors, supporting business start-ups and diversification, and increasing the number of workers employed in the Park. Visitor surveys demonstrate a high level of satisfaction and appreciation for what the park has to offer. The park maintains a close working relationship with The Moray Council on planning matters, economic development and LEADER projects. There are a number of challenges for the park moving forward including the provision of affordable housing to help sustain local employment.

## 10. Tourism and Culture

### Tourism and Culture Strategies

#### Moray Cultural Strategy 2014-2017

Published in February 2015, the vision of the strategy is that Moray is recognised as a creative place with the following objectives:

- Recognise the positive impact of creativity for everyone.
- Encourage new ways to encounter creativity in the everyday.
- Empower communities to establish sustainable cultural activities.
- Develop tools to connect and communicate about cultural activity.
- Grow quality cultural activities, festivals and events.
- Make effective use of our built environment and natural heritage.
- Ensure access to creative learning for all who seek it.
- Help creative businesses to start, grow and develop.

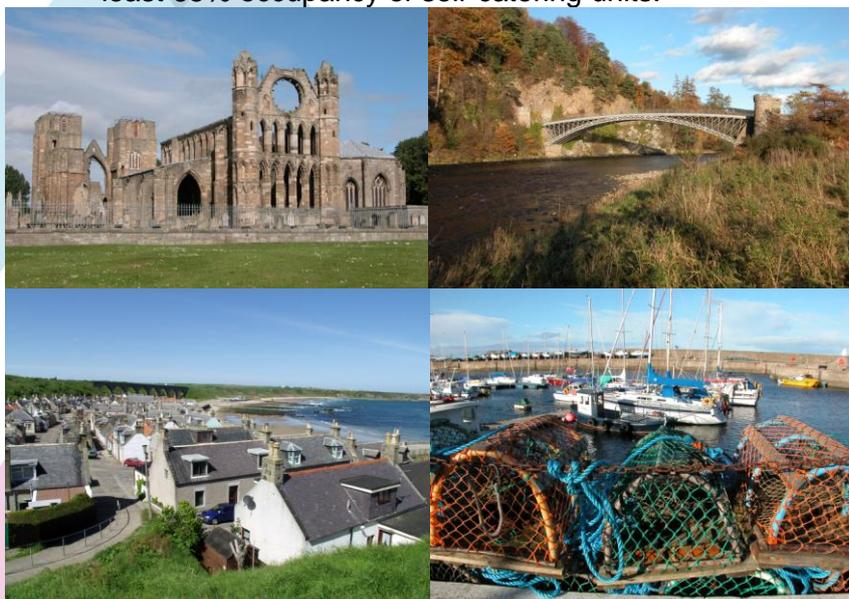
The strategy identifies a number of opportunities relating to these objectives and is used to guide the Tourism and Culture Programme Group of the Moray Economic Partnership.

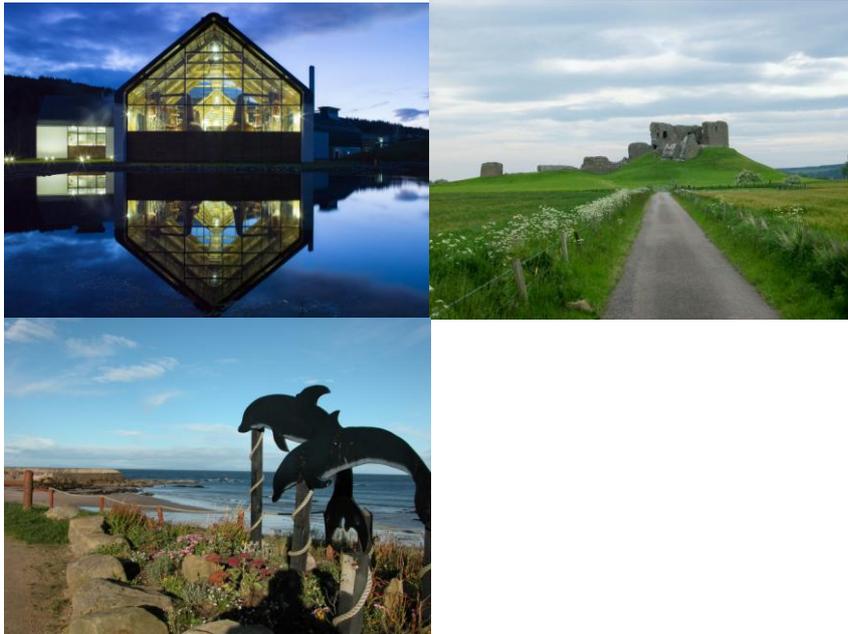
#### The Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray

Tourism generates over 10% of Moray's total employment and 3.8% of the total turnover of businesses. Visitor spending in Moray is in the region of £85m-90m per year. This compares with figures of £330m-335m for Argyll, and £300m for Aberdeenshire.

Prepared in 2013 under the auspices of the Moray Economic Partnership, the strategy was launched in March 2014. The vision is to:

- Double the economic value of tourism;
- Double the size of the tourism-related workforce, with at least 80% living locally and fully skilled for their job, and trained in customer care;
- Achieve annual occupancy of serviced accommodation rooms of at least 75%, and at least 65% occupancy of self-catering units.





### **Moray Speyside Tourism**

In April 2014, *MoraySpeyside Tourism*, part of Moray Chamber of Commerce, was established and tasked by the Moray Economic Partnership with assisting the tourism industry in the Moray Speyside area to achieve the strategic vision for tourism, including a doubling of the economic value of tourism by 2025.

In 2014-15 a marketing framework was developed that reflects the Focus Years adopted by Visit Scotland with an overall theme of “Made in Moray” linking people, place and product. The Marketing Campaign Themes for 2015-16 are:

- A food & drink campaign called A Moray Speyside Larder, celebrating the quality and diversity of our region’s food and drink products. Products being developed include a guide in digital and printed format, promotional materials and activities and a YouTube video to be hosted on a dedicated YouTube channel.
- A Laich Coast marketing campaign promoting our exceptional coastline, the communities living there and the range of activities visitors can enjoy. Planned products include a distinctive map of the coast and a YouTube video.
- A Cycle Moray Speyside campaign, based on the growing popularity of road, mountain and trail cycling. Accompanying a new *Cycle Moray Speyside* guide in print and digital form, and the identification of up to eight cycling ambassadors, will be a cycling-themed YouTube video.
- In addition support is being provided for a community-led campaign in the Forres area – Visit IV36 - aiming to raise awareness of the area and promote short breaks.



## castle to cathedral to cashmere

The Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere partnership initiative has raised over £400,000 for a heritage initiative which will bring over 1000 years of history to life through various mediums ranging from website with mobile technology, 3D interactive model, 3D high definition scanning, interpretation at over 25 sites, signage, public realm/access works to activity and events programme, involving more than 17 organisations with their volunteers - making Elgin & Moray a must see destination, engaging more people in their heritage.

The project is aimed at visitors and the community with an emphasis to encourage younger people to engage in their heritage. The different levels of interpretation will provide an enjoyable experience and learning opportunity of the heritage for all, from those who would like just a snapshot, to people who would like in-depth information.

### **Laich of Moray**

Partner organisations are developing the story of the Laich of Moray to celebrate the cultural landscape and exploit its visitor development potential.

### **Moray Film Liaison Service**

Moray Film Liaison Service offers the film industry, free and confidential advice for visiting productions. This includes: information on locations and permissions; road closures etc. whether it's a feature film or a stills shoot.

Some of the filming included: Great British Railway Journeys where one episode featured Michael Portillo retraces the journeys from George Bradshaw's 1913 Continental Guide along the Dufftown to Aviemore line learning how Victorian whisky trains were raided by robbers. A group of Dutch filmmakers produced a short film in Forres to be shown at European film festivals.

### **Events**

The Economic Development team in consultation with other departments have been working with organisers which have resulted in successful events for the area, two of these major events being:

#### **Piping@Forres**

This year Piping@Forres was held on Saturday 27 June in Grant Park with over 20,000 spectators with over 100 pipe bands competing.



### **World Orienteering Championships and Scottish 6 Days**

The World Orienteering Championships (WOC) a high profile sporting event and incorporating the Scottish Six Days Championships, were held in Moray and the Highlands between 31 July and 7 August 2015 with events held in Forres and at Darnaway, as well as at Nairn and Glen Affric. There were a total of 8,217 participants and spectators at the Highland 2015 event. The key findings from the economic impact assessment are that 93% of participants and spectators were from outside Highland & Moray and 86% from outside Scotland. A total of 94% stayed overnight. The economic impact assessment for the event are £7.4M of direct, indirect and induced expenditure in Highlands & Moray, and nearly £9.5M for Scotland as a whole.



### Markets and Events

The Moray Council is keen to support markets and other non-commercial events and recognises these as an important part of community life. A framework has been developed for markets and events to take place in Elgin, Forres, Keith, Buckie and Lossiemouth. In the past year there have been 25 markets, 18 events, 20 awareness campaigns and 3 charity collections throughout Moray with a further 5 markets, 2 events, 2 awareness campaigns and 1 charity collection to take place before December 2015.

The events included the Christmas Lights switch on, Rotary Marafun, Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere 'Castle Treasure Hunt', Moray Farmers Markets, and musical events by Elgin City Brass Band, a visiting German Youth Orchestra and local bands as well as a number of educational and informative awareness campaigns. Elgin BID have recorded an increase in pedestrian numbers/shoppers on the Plainstones and town centre when events are taking place.

### 11. Priority 1 Projects - Corporate Plan – Sustainable Economic Development

- Elgin Charrette and Masterplan – Pg 32
- Buckie Harbour –Pg 12
- Promotion of A96 dualling- Pg 11
- Promote improvements on the A95 – Pg 11
- Promotion of increased train frequency and freight – Pg 15

- Promoting high speed broadband – Pg 14
- Support Town Centre conservation and regeneration schemes – Pg 29
- Reduce carbon and energy – Pg 29-30
- Delivery of Housing – Pg 5-7
- Support for business through Business Gateway – Pg 20
- Promotion of Moray Tourism Strategy – Pg 35 -39
- Provision of industrial units and business premises – Pg 7 -8
- Promotion of Tomintoul and Glenlivet Heritage project - Pg 25

Note:- Promotion of Kinloss as a spaceport was frustrated by the decision of the Ministry of Defence to remove both RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks from any further consideration for operational reasons. The recent announcement to extend the operational life of the Typhoons at Lossiemouth and the addition a new fleet of nine maritime patrol aircraft is a very welcome boost for the local economy.

## 12. Local Performance Indicators

The following has been devised as a set of local indicators of the state of the local economy. The data for population, gross weekly pay, percentage of those in employment that are graduates and percentage of workforce in the private sector are also indicators currently included as indicators in Moray 2023 which is monitored by the Moray Economic Partnership. The partnership is establishing a statistics group to review a wider range of economic and demographic statistics that are being collated by the University of the Highlands and Islands for the economic partnership. The intention is that the group will seek to identify trends and commission any bespoke analysis that may be required to clarify what the statistics may be indicating.

Source	Indicator	2013	2014	% change
MC	Number of Building Warrant Applications	683	703	2.9
MC	Number of Planning Applications	1580	1700	7.6
Registers of Scotland	Average House Price	£143,224	£147,783	3.2
Registers of Scotland	House Sales	1,430	1,779	24.4
ONS	Number of Enterprises	2900	2935	1.2
ONS - mid year estimate	Population	94400	94800	0.4
ONS Nomis official labour market statistics	Gross Weekly Pay by workplace	£465.80	£451.50	-0.3
ONS Nomis official labour market statistics	Gross Weekly Pay by residence	£440.00	£434.30	-1.3
Annual Employment Survey (Nomis)	% workforce in private sector	75.6%	77.2%	1.6%
Annual Population Survey (Nomis)	% of those in employment who are graduates	20.3%	19.4%	-0.9%
Business Gateway	New businesses were supported to start-up with one-to-one advice	132	121	-8.3
DWP	Job Seekers Allowance Claimants /August	879	751	-14.5