



**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
6 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**SUBJECT: MORAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING
REPORT**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to consider and approve the Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) Annual Monitoring Report 2016.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the review and preparation of Local Development Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee considers and approves the Monitoring Report, as set out in Appendix 1, and the updated Action Programme, as detailed in Appendix 2.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following a report to a special meeting of this Committee on 24 June 2015, it was agreed that an annual monitoring report providing information on the Local Development Plan (LDP) Action Programme, Housing and Employment Land Audits and demographic changes would be submitted to Committee (paragraph 5 of the minute refers). It was also subsequently agreed at a meeting of this Committee on the 19 April 2016 that an annual Local Review Body (LRB) report be prepared and reported to the Committee as part of the MLDP Monitoring Report (paragraph 10 of the minute refers).

4. **ANNUAL MONITORING**

4.1 The annual MLDP Monitoring Report in **Appendix 1** provides:

- An update on progress of actions set out within the LDP Action Programme
- An overview of the Housing and Employment Land Audits
- An overview of demographic changes and projections
- A review of LRB cases
- A summary of issues and trends arising which need to be addressed in the next LDP.

4.2 The 2015 population for Moray was 95,510 which is an increase of 0.8% from 2014; however by 2037 the population is projected to drop to 90,889. Projections also show that it is expected that Moray will continue to see a decline in the 0-29 age group and an increase in the 75+ category. The projections highlight that there will be a significant change in the demographics of Moray with a population that is ageing faster than the Scottish average with a trend towards smaller households. These trends will have implications for local service provision such as health care facilities for the elderly, education and also housing provision. The changing demographics are likely to put additional strains on housing supply and house type provision such as need for more accessible housing to meet these new needs and requirements.

4.3 The MLDP Action Programme 2015 sets out the actions necessary to implement the strategy and policies of the plan. The Action Programme will be updated every two years, and therefore a new Action Programme will be prepared for 2017. For the purposes of the 2016 Monitoring Report, a short update on progress on each action has been included in the final column of the Action Programme in **Appendix 2**. In broad terms progress could be summarised as follows:

- Good progress on the preparation of Supplementary Guidance (SG) and processes to help deliver development;
- Changes highlighted to Scottish Water capacities;
- New Transport Strategy for Elgin;
- Progress on Elgin school rezoning and establishing a new school in Elgin south; and
- Settlement actions highlight that development interest continues to be focused in Elgin, Forres and Buckie, with slower progress being made on actions within Keith and Lossiemouth. Highlights limited activity within third tier settlements particularly those in Speyside and along the coast.

4.4 38 cases have been before the LRB since the adoption of MLDP 2015. This is higher than previous years, for example in 2013 a total of 24 cases were reviewed. 58% of the cases since July 2015 were upheld (approved). Housing in the countryside proposals accounted for 52% of LRB cases, and there was an even split between these being upheld and dismissed (refused).

A full report of LRB statistics and key trends for the period 2013 to 2015 was reported to this Committee on 19 April 2016 (paragraph 10 of the minute refers).

- 4.5 The Housing Land Audit 2016 shows an effective housing land supply of 4958 units, meeting the requirements to have a five year effective supply. Completions have increased from 309 in 2014 to 337 in 2015. The Moray Housing Land Audit 2016 was reported to this Committee on the 14 June 2016 (paragraph 17 of the draft minute refers).
- 4.6 The Employment Land Audit 2016 has highlighted a shortage of immediately available service employment land and a shortage of effective land within Elgin. The Moray Employment Land Audit 2016 was reported to this Committee on the 14 June 2016 (paragraph 18 of the draft minute refers).
- 4.7 Build-up of housing in the countryside in certain areas continues to be an issue that has been highlighted through the Rural Groupings Review, LRB cases and queries raised within the LDP Policy Log. A Landscape consultant was commissioned and has completed a Landscape report. This highlighted that in the areas reviewed landscape and visual capacity has been exceeded and threatens to merge the character of rural and urban. The content of the landscape report is to be considered further by officers and will inform a workshop to be held at the end of 2016 with Elected Members and will form part of the evidence base for new Housing in the Countryside policies. The review of the Rural Groupings SG has highlighted that the settlement hierarchy is not working as intended and that there is further scope to identify a significant number of new rural groupings and explore the relationship with the housing in the countryside policies through the Main Issues Report as part of the preparation of the next MLDP.
- 4.8 MLDP 2015 introduced a new primary policy in relation to Placemaking and the Urban Design SG was updated. To support the new policy approach a Quality Audit process has been introduced to assess design quality of proposals. A programme of masterplans has also been progressed with the Findrassie Masterplan adopted in December 2015, the Elgin South Masterplan was subject to public consultation in May/June 2016, and the Dallas Dhu Masterplan is in preparation and has been subject to the Architecture and Design Scotland Review Panel process.
- 4.9 An Open Space Strategy is currently being prepared with the audit work now completed. Work is now progressing on analysing the audit information and identifying opportunities, surpluses and deficiencies within the open space resources and developing standards. The Draft Open Space Strategy will be reported to Committee with a view to this being consulted upon at the end of 2016/early 2017.

- 4.10 Since adoption of the MLDP 2015, a small number of planning applications have come within the scope of Policy H9 and the Accessible Housing SG. However, developers have been mainly providing flats as their accessible housing contribution. These are less likely to fulfil its objectives, i.e. to provide people with disabilities with increased availability of bungalows to suit their tenure and design choice. Revised SG has been consulted upon which would require half of the private sector accessible housing units to be single storey i.e. a bungalow. The responses to that consultation are being reported to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 6 September 2016.
- 4.11 Updated Wind Energy Guidance has been prepared and will be the subject of a separate report on the agenda for this Committee. The draft guidance will be subject to 8 weeks public consultation later in 2016.
- 4.12 A Woodlands Strategy is being prepared and a Call for Ideas and engagement events were undertaken between April and July. A draft Woodland Strategy will be reported to this Committee on 1 November 2016.
- 4.13 Developer Obligations SG will be submitted to the Scottish Government and upon approval will be adopted to form part of the MLDP. It is proposed to establish an Infrastructure Delivery Group with representatives from Community Planning Partners and infrastructure providers to project and cost future infrastructure requirements. The Service Level Agreement with Aberdeenshire Council will be reviewed by December 2016.
- 4.14 A new Transport Strategy for Elgin is being prepared by the Transport Development team. The Planning and Development team are actively participating and assisting in the strategy development. The strategy will be an important consideration for Elgin in the development of the next LDP.
- 4.15 The Monitoring Report will be used to inform the preparation of the next LDP, with the next Main Issues Report to be reported to Committee at the end of 2017.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Moray 2026: A Plan for the Future and Moray Corporate Plan 2015 – 2017**

The LDP is a vital aspect of supporting and facilitating the Council's priority for economic growth. In addition to the land designations for housing and employment land, the Plan sets out policies and an Action Programme which will be delivered through positive engagement with partner organisations, developers and consultees. The plan also aims to deliver other key aspects of Moray 2026 including the delivery of affordable housing and conservation and enhancement of our high quality environment. Monitoring the Plan is important to ensure actions are progressed, an evidence base is kept up to date and that Moray 2026 is supported.

(b) Policy and Legal

Preparation of the LDP is a statutory responsibility of the Council as Planning Authority.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

The risk of not monitoring the LDP would be an out of date evidence base being used for preparing the next LDP. There could also be a failure to provide an effective housing and employment land supply.

(e) Staffing Implications

Preparing the LDP and monitoring its performance are part of the workload of the Planning and Development section.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities

An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed as the report is to inform the Committee on monitoring of the LDP only.

(h) Consultations

The Corporate Director (Economic Development Planning & Infrastructure), the Head of Development Services, the Legal Services Manager (Property & Contracts), the Equal Opportunities Officer, and Darren Westmacott (Committee Services Officer) have been consulted, and comments received have been incorporated into the report.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The MLDP Annual Monitoring Report provides an evidence base which can be used in the preparation and development of the next LDP. The 2016 Monitoring Report continues to identify that projections show an ageing and falling population which will have implications for service and housing provision.**

- 6.2 The Report shows good progress on the preparation SG and processes to help deliver development including Rural Groupings, Developer Obligations, Wind Energy, and Accessible Housing. The Report also notes progress being made on the preparation of the Open Space Strategy and Woodland Strategy. The report highlights that development interests continue to be focused in Elgin, Buckie and Forres, with lower activity in Keith and Lossiemouth. The Report shows the limited activity within third tier settlement particularly in Speyside and Coastal areas.**
- 6.3 The Report identifies a shortage of serviced employment land across Moray and the shortage of effective employment land in Elgin. The Report recognises the progress being made to improve design quality and the processes in place to continue to raise design standards in new development. The Report identifies issues arising in relation to build up of housing in the countryside and a failure of the settlement hierarchy in terms of development within rural groupings.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: