



**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
15 AUGUST 2017**

**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 2017.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (E) (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 Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) Monitoring Report (paragraph 10 of the minute refers).

4. Annual Monitoring

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

- An overview of demographic changes and projections;
- An overview of the Housing and Employment Land Audits
- An update on progress of actions set out within the LDP Action Programme;
- A review of LRB cases.

Population and Demographics

4.2 The 2016 population for Moray was 96,070 which is a 0.6% increase from 2015. Long term projections show that the population by 2039 will be 95,583 which is a slight decrease from the current population. However, this long term projection is significantly higher than the long term population projection that was reported in the 2015 Monitoring Report which suggested a significant population decrease to 90,889 by 2037. Members should be wary of long term population projections. In a report presented to the Environmental Services Committee in 2004 (paragraph 2.2 of the report refers), population projections were of concern as they indicated that Moray's population could fall by 8 percent over the period from 2002 to 2018 to below 80,000. This projection has proven to be significantly incorrect given the current population is 96,070. There is no reason to suggest that the population of Moray will level out or decrease at this time given the continued population growth since 2002.

4.3 Projections also show that Moray will continue to see a decline in the 0-29 age group and an increase in the 75+ category reflecting our ageing population. The current projections highlight that there will be a significant change in the demographics of Moray with an ageing population and a trend towards smaller households. These projections will have implications for local service provision such as health care facilities for the elderly and housing provision. The changing demographics are also likely to put additional strains on housing supply and house type provision such as the need for more accessible housing to meet these new needs and requirements.

Housing and Employment Land Supply

4.4 The Moray Housing Land Audit 2017 was reported to this Committee on the 30 May 2017 (paragraph 12 of the draft minute refers) and shows an effective housing land supply of 4094 units, meeting the requirements to have a five year effective supply. Completions have decreased from 337 in 2015 to 334 in 2016 which is significantly lower than the annual need and demand for 538 units. While the overall effective land supply is good, the projected house completions reflect the low supply of new housing in Keith and Speyside. Officers are currently looking at how existing sites can be made more effective as part of the preparation for the MLDP 2020.

- 4.5 The Employment Land Audit was reported to this Committee on 29 May 2017 (paragraph 13 of the minute refers). It identifies that there is a 80.62 hectares (net) of marketable/effective employment land, of which 18.07 hectares (net) is immediately available. This is a decrease of 18.79 and 0.78 hectares respectively compared to 2016. Issues are identified with the supply of serviced land for immediate development and the restricted choice of sites across settlements. The Barmuckity Business Park Strategic Framework was approved on 1 November 2016 (paragraph 9 of the minute refers) and will aid delivery of the site and ensure a marketable/effective employment land supply can be maintained in Elgin. This has meant that land at Barmuckity has moved from constrained to marketable/effective which has improved supply levels in Elgin.

MLDP Action Programme

- 4.6 The MLDP Action Programme 2015 sets out the actions necessary to implement the strategy and policies of the plan. The 2016 Monitoring Report provided an update on the progress of each action and highlighted that a number of actions had been completed with good on-going progress being made on several others. The 2017 Monitoring Report provides a further update on each action as well as new actions that have been identified. A short update on progress on each action has been included in the final column of the Action Programme in **Appendix 2**.

Action Plan Updates

- 4.7 The following are updates on the preparation and adoption of Supplementary Guidance (SG) and other Policy Documents which are identified in the action plan;
- During the recent review of Moray's rural groupings which was approved by this Committee on 14 June 2016 (paragraph 14 of the minute refers), the build up of housing in the open countryside was identified as one of the key planning issues facing Moray and will be included in the Main Issues Report which will be reported to this Committee on December 2017. A landscape consultant was commissioned and completed a landscape report which was approved for public consultation by this Committee on 1 November 2016 (paragraph 10 of the minute refers). The report focused on 8 study areas identified as hotspots in the Housing in the Countryside SG and concluded that in some areas the degree of cumulative build up has resulted in the landscape being changed so much that the rural environment could not be described as high quality as the character of rural and urban had merged. The finalised report will be considered by this Committee on 15 August 2017.
 - A Forestry and Woodlands Strategy has been prepared to inform the development of forestry and woodland in Moray. The finalised version will be considered by this Committee on 15 August 2017.
 - An open space strategy has been completed and a final version will be considered by this Committee on 15 August 2017. It provides a

strategic vision for the provision, development, maintenance and management of open space. The application of standards aims to improve consistency in decision making and will support the guidance in respect of MLDP Policy E5 Open Spaces.

- A revision to the Accessible Housing SG was made which requires half (50%) of the private sector accessible housing units that are delivered are single storey i.e. a bungalow to ensure a mix of house types that more accurately reflects need and demand. The revised SG was approved at a meeting of this committee on 6 September 2016 (paragraph 9 of the minute refers).
- Updated Wind Energy SG has been prepared and approved at a meeting of this Committee on 28 February 2017 (paragraph 7 of the minute refers). The finalised guidance has been submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval.
- Five development briefs have been prepared for sites allocated for residential development in the MLDP. The development briefs set out the design standards for future development of these sites and developers will be expected to reflect these design standards in their proposals. The final version of the development briefs will be considered by this Committee on 15 August 2017.
- Three masterplans have recently been approved by this Committee. The Findrassie masterplan was on 1 December 2015 (paragraph 7 of the minute refers). The Elgin South and Dallas Dhu masterplans were approved on 30 May 2017 (paragraph 6 & 7 of the minute refers). Work on the Bilbohall Masterplan is ongoing and it is anticipated that a draft will be presented to a meeting of this Committee in December 2017.
- Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance was approved by the Scottish Government on 14 October 2016 and now forms part of the statutory Moray Local Development Plan. This is currently under review and will be considered by this Committee on 15 August 2017.
- Preparation of the Developer Obligations SG has identified the need for longer term co-ordinated planning for infrastructure between community planning partners and infrastructure providers. An Infrastructure Delivery Group with representatives from Community Planning Partners, infrastructure providers and Council Officers has been set up to project and cost future infrastructure requirements and monitor the delivery of Developer Obligations. The Service Level Agreement with the Aberdeenshire Council Planning Obligations Unit was not renewed and the service was brought in-house on 1 April 2017.
- A new Transport Strategy for Elgin has been prepared and undergone public consultation. It is anticipated that this will be presented to a special meeting of Full Council to be held on 9 August 2017.

LRB Overview

- 4.8 20 cases have been reviewed by the Local Review Body (LRB) between August 2016 and May 2017. This is significantly lower than the previous monitoring period of August 2015 to July 2016 which had a total of 38 cases. This decrease in cases is attributed to the Local Council Elections which were held in May 2017 as this meant that there has been a time delay in cases being considered. 50% of cases were upheld (approved) which is similar to

2016. Housing in the countryside applications accounted for 75% of LRB cases with an even split between cases being upheld and dismissed which is again similar to the levels reported in 2016.

Implications for the LDP 2020

- 4.9 The monitoring report identifies a number of issues to be addressed in the new Local Development Plan. The Monitoring Report will be supported by a series of Topic Papers and a State of the Environment report to form a baseline of evidence for the issues to be considered in the Main Issues Report, which will be reported to this Committee on December 2017. A workshop for members is being arranged for early September to consider the main issues.

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), Deborah Brands (Principal Accountant), the Equal Opportunities Officer and the Democratic Services Manager have been consulted and their comments 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 2017 Monitoring Report continues to identify that population and household projections show an ageing population with significantly more households forming which will have implications for service and housing provision.**
- 6.2 The report shows good progress on the preparation of Supplementary Guidance and processes to help deliver development including a programme of masterplans & development briefs, open space strategy, woodlands strategy, wind energy, infrastructure delivery group and developer obligations. 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 settlements particularly in Speyside and Coastal areas.**
- 6.3 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 and explains that work is progressing in reviewing the housing in the countryside policy as part of the preparation for the next MLDP. The Report identifies a shortage of serviced employment land across Moray and the shortage of effective employment land in Elgin. The report recognises that good progress is being made to improve design standards in new development through the continued use of the Quality Audit process.**

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Background Papers:
Ref: