

Moray Economic Strategy – Implementation Programme Status Update April to June 2014

Overall

- The Partnership met May 20, 2014 hosted by Gordon & MacPhail, Elgin. Following a discussion with Lieutenant Colonel Tom Marsden 39 Engineer Regiment, (Kinloss Barracks) about how the partnership and Army can continue to assist each other, the partnership held a work session to verify the targets from the Moray 2023 Plan (The Ten Plan of the Community Planning Board) it will act together on, facilitate and influence other stakeholders to reach.
- These were subsequently agreed with the CPB June 19 and include: population growth, the regional average wage, employment in the private sector, timeous processing of planning applications, employment skills to meet employers skills needs, improvements to strategic roads infrastructure (A9-A96), business start ups and survival and householders access to next generation broadband.
- The partnership [media centre](#) “newsroom” is up and running. The newsroom has been purchased by the partnership to provide information about implementation of the Moray Economic Strategy. It identifies Moray as a place to live work and invest. Partners have the ability to put information on the newsroom about themselves and their activities.
- Communications during this period have included articles in the Scotsman April 14 (Digital Health), June 13 (Whisky Investments). Herald April 22 (Distillery Investments, also covered in the Press & Journal, Northern Scot (Moray 1 of top 3 for employment). Other releases included availability of harbour facilities for sale or lease at Buckie, opportunities for business for to coincide with the All Energy Exhibition in 21-22 June. Features on Moray Strategic Business Forum and the Skills and Training Programme in the Northern Scot. See [MEP facebook](#).
- On April 15 Moray Council held a [Meet the Buyer event](#) in the Alexander Graham Bell Centre at Moray College UHI which saw an overwhelming turnout of over 300 businesses eager to find out more about the council, its use of Public Contract Scotland and PCS Tender.
- On June 5 the Partnership was presented as a best practice case study at the National Community Planning Conference in Edinburgh “ Changing Lives: Celebrating Success”
- On June 21-22 HIE and the Council promoted investment opportunities in Moray including Enterprise Park Forres and Buckie Harbour at the All Energy Exhibition in Aberdeen.

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Tourism and Culture

Project: Establishing body with strong governance to deliver tourism development for Moray

Moray Chamber of Commerce has now recruited a Tourism Operations Manager assisted by a social media specialist (0.5 FTE). Staffs are concentrating on establishment of the MoraySpeyside brand, development of the MoraySpeyside.com web site, promotion of WorldHost Customer Care training, business engagement and project development.

Project: Assist Hotel Development

Development of 4/5 star hotel at Coleburn Distillery. Negotiations are taking place with funding partners, with support from HIE Business Growth Team.

The Craigellachie Hotel has re-opened after extensive refurbishment.

Project: Visitor Orientation

The C&T Group and the Skills Group are working with People 1st with the aim of achieving WorldHost Destination status for Moray. Moray is one of 10 pilot areas identified in Scotland and People 1st have applied for funding from the Scottish Government to provide financial support for the pilot areas. This funding has not been approved to date (16/06/14) however assistance for businesses with fewer than 100 employees will be available from Skills Development Scotland.

Project: New Arts School/Centre

A public meeting has been held in Buckie by a group wishing to establish a traditional music centre in Buckie.

Project: Laich of Moray

A new steering group has been established with a cross-section of business, heritage, training and educational interests in the Laich of Moray. The group will develop the idea first put forward by Jim Royan based on the extraordinary historical, social and cultural heritage of the area.

Project: Dufftown and Forres

Tracks 2015 has been formed as a joint project between Forres and Dufftown in partnership with the Great Canadian Travel Company to celebrate the achievements of cousins Lord Strathcona and Lord Mountstevan in Canada.

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Skills and Training

- The Skills and Training group continues to meet monthly. Working on priority actions but still waiting on the approval of the Highlands and Islands Strategic Investment plan. The Wood commission will also influence the group's ongoing actions.
- The group organised an employer event for Modern Apprenticeship week. This was to also provide an opportunity to promote the Shared Apprenticeship

Scheme. The event had to be cancelled due to a lack of interest. The group have been re-evaluating why this was the case and agree that any future events should be an add-on to something else. In the meantime one to one sessions with employers will continue. The MA numbers for Moray College UHI are on the increase with new employers coming on board which is a good sign.

- The Shared Apprenticeship scheme has made some progress. 5 employers so far have indicated an interest in taking part. The difficulty has been identifying enough young people. The opportunity has now been referred to the DWP and the age range has been increased to up to 30.
- **European Funding:** Moray College UHI have been awarded £112,000 for the delivery of a range of courses funded through an underspend from the last round of EU funding. This funding will be used to deliver activity to a range of client groups from aged 18 upwards including Lone Parents, young people and older people coming out of the work programme. The proposal was developed in partnership with the Moray CPP and will address some of the issues in relation to provision for older people which the SIP fails to address. The Employability Action group have submitted proposals through the CPP for funding to enhance the existing Skills Pipeline. All CPPs' were invited to submit ideas within the Social Inclusion section of the ESIF funding 2014 – 2020.
- Jobsfayre – the group are considering arranging a Jobsfayre for late September which will include schools as well as members of the public. Use this as an opportunity to promote the MA's
- The group are having a scoping meeting in August to pull together all the strands in relation to skills and training: SIP/Wood Commission/Employability Strategy/10 year plan and consider the new priority plan for 2014/15.

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Development

The Consultants' Report on **The Elgin City Centre Masterplan: Charrette**, jointly funded by Moray Council and Scottish Government, is to be completed in July. A report on the key features and findings and way forward is to be presented to the Council's ED&IS Committee on 5 August. Subject to funding, it is intended to undertake a wider, public Charrette during this financial year, to further inform the Masterplan, and would include a more detailed financial appraisal. As a result of this Masterplan and related Development Brief, The MEP will have a proposition which can be used to market specific investment and development opportunities, which can contribute to the regeneration of central Elgin.

The development of the Masterplan will address and coordinate the following individual projects which are identified in The Moray Economic Strategy Action Plan:

- **Lossie Green Development Brief**
- **A96 North Development Brief**

- **Southern A96 Frontage Consolidation**
- **Town Hall Feasibility Assessment**
- **Bus Station Relocation**
- **Alexandra Road Improvements**
- **Lossie Green Multi Storey Car Park**
- **Replacement Lorry Park**
- **City Centre Lighting Strategy**
- **New Arts School / Centre**
- **Assist Hotel Development**

These projects are to be developed in conjunction with the other Programme Groups, and in particular Tourism and Culture, and Transportation.

Other live projects are:

Options Appraisal for potential location of an all weather football pitch in central Elgin. One consideration of relevance for The MES is the potential loss of development value should an option be selected which requires land identified in the Lossie Green Masterplan. Costings are being prepared, to inform discussions with a potential funder

Proposed retail development at **Bogton Road, Forres**, including potential relocation of Forres Mechanics FC. Moray Council has commissioned property and legal advice in order to assist in further consideration of proposal by developer. A report on this is to be presented to The Council by the end 2014.

Buckie Harbour. Assisting Transportation Group in making plans which may lead to development and expansion of harbour.

Industrial Portfolio – Capital Development Programme. A report on this Programme, which is intended to support the main aims/objectives of The Moray Economic Strategy by helping to diversify and grow the Moray economy, was considered by the Council in March, when it was agreed to approve new industrial development projects detailed in the confidential report, including development of units at March Road, Buckie.

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Transportation

- **Developments at Buckie Harbour:** Design work is progressing on the refurbishment of the Old Net Store in Buckie to convert it to 6 new industrial units which it is hoped will provide for harbour-related activities. Planning permission and Building Warrant has been obtained. Anticipated completion end December 2014. Marketing of the Buckie Shipyard is now closed and responses are being analysed. Discussions with other harbour-related companies are still progressing with the hope that this may lead to future expansion and development of the harbour. Preliminary discussions have begun with a major renewable energy company but we are still some way away from when decisions will be made on which port will accommodate

O&M activities.

- **Dualling of the A96:** Work by the Transport Scotland design team and their consultant is continuing. There was a liaison meeting with Local Authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships in April 2014 and a meeting to discuss Moray issues in more detail with Transport Scotland took place on 9 June. It is likely that alternative routes for the dual carriageway in Moray will be available for consultation in about 12 months time.
- **A95 Craigellachie to Aviemore:** HITRANS have offered to contribute up to £20k to the Moray Economic Partnership for a study to determine the economic and operational benefits of improving parts of the A95, and to identify the work required to gain maximum benefits from relatively low cost improvements. This work has been delayed and will commence in July 2014.
- **Lossie Green, Elgin.** There are 4 transportation theme projects linked to this proposal. These are the relocation of the Elgin Bus Station, the relocation of the Elgin Lorry Park, car parking and improvements to junctions and pedestrian facilities on Alexandra Road, and consideration of these transport issues will form an integral part of any development proposals. No transportation work has started on this as timescale is dependent on the main development project.
- **Elgin Cycle Network:** The Council has been successful in its bid for funding from Sustrans who are administering the £20m Government fund for “Community Links” projects. It is proposed to construct a cycleway along the full length of the floodworks embankment running East - West through Elgin, and if possible, extended to Lhanbryde. This will link a significant number of residential areas with areas of employment and retail activities in the town, improving accessibility to jobs and to businesses. Design work is progressing on this project.
- **Whisky Tourist Transport:** The need for local transport to cater for whisky tourists in Speyside during the summer months has been identified. It is proposed to work jointly with the Tourism and Culture group to assess feasibility and then liaise with the whisky industry to determine if there is a willingness to provide transport. This project has yet to progress.

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Inward Investment and Business Growth

- **Enterprise Park Forres-** Heads of Terms agreed with a prospective tenant for Unit 8 subject to a contract being won. Current healthy pipeline of enquiries for commercial property. Paper being drafted for HIE’s leadership team to set future direction and secure further resource. Work commenced on planning further infrastructure development for the Southside of the park and design of a further 3 units.
- **Buckie Harbour –** Master plan is being commissioned to explore the

possibilities for developing the harbour area; this is due to report in autumn 2014. Learning journey for stakeholders being planned to O&M ports in England – visit expected in August/September. A number of meetings have been held with key stakeholder businesses around the harbour. Further meetings to follow.

- **Barmuckity/Elgin Business Park** - Negotiations between parties are on-going.
- **Inward Investment** – 23 enquiries received over the past 12 months. A number of companies have located/expanded in the area with discussions still underway with a number of other investors. A Live, Work, Relax campaign is being taken forward to generate material that will promote Moray as a place to live and work. An event targeting the Oil and Gas sector is being planned with Energy North for autumn. This will aim to attract companies whose growth is being constrained in Aberdeen to grow in Moray.

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