

Moray Economic Strategy (MES) Quarterly Update Jan to March 2015

Overall

The quarter was busy as usual, notably with the [Central Elgin Regeneration Public Design Charrette](#) and the launch of the [Cultural Strategy](#)

Disappointing news came from the [Department for Transportation](#) removing RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks from the shortlist of locations being considered for a UK Spaceport and with the rejection of EDPR's application to the Department of Energy and Climate Change for assistance via [Contract for Difference](#) to establish an Operations and Maintenance Base for Offshore renewables at Buckie harbour.

During the quarter media coverage included: Good news of a grant from the Heritage Lottery fund towards the Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere- Elgin Heritage Experience project, pieces in the Scotsman outlining Moray as ripe for inward investment with population growth and investments by the food and drink sector, business start-ups, and ambition to grow the visitor economy. Promotion of the World Host customer service training programme, successes achieved through small and medium sized enterprises employing more than 100 young people through the Youth Employment Scotland funding and promotion of Moray Business to follow the lead of Diageo to get involved with [Career Academies UK](#) to establish mentoring and learning opportunities for young people (Please contact smedcraf@moraychamber.co.uk). MEP Media services included regular updates on MEP activities in the Northern Scot and supported the second annual computer game design competition "[Game Jam](#)" held by Moray College UHI.

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Tourism and Culture

- **NEW** Moray Cultural Strategy has been "wholeheartedly" endorsed by Creative Scotland.
- **NEW** The launch of the Cultural Strategy was attended by almost 100 people, including representatives from Creative Scotland, the National Theatre of Scotland, National Trust and Historic Scotland.
- **NEW** Findhorn Bay Arts has been short listed for the Creative Place Awards. FBA is now working on the stage two application which if successful will bring £100,000 pounds to the Forres Area for development of the arts. The three communities shortlisted to win £100,000 are: Forres, Isle of Arran and Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park. Winners to be announced at the Awards Ceremony on 10th June at Falkirk Town Hall.

<http://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/latest-news/archive/2015/03/nine-scottish-communities-shortlisted-for-the-creative-place-awards-2015>

- Moray Tourism Summit was held on 3rd April. The event was well attended and also well received.
- Moray Speyside, Johnstons of Elgin and the Craigellachie Hotel have stands at Visit Scotland Expo in Aberdeen on 22nd and 23rd April, in partnership.
- **NEW** Moray Speyside with the Banff Coast Tourism Partnership and Fraserburgh Partnership will be promoting Scotland's Dolphin Coast using a branded motor caravan in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. Moray Towns Leaflet which has been produced with Moray Towns Partnership funding will be distributed, together with Moray Speyside's new leaflet to be introduced at the VS Expo.
- **NEW** Moray Speyside will be distributing brochures at the World Orienteering Championships in July 15.

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Skills and Training

STG/Action plan - The action plan has been revised to map the key priorities for the group against that of the [Regional Skills Investment Plan](#) (RSIP) and the [Scotland's Young Workforce](#) (SYW). Jim Morris, Moray Council Education Services, has joined the group as replacement for Joe Bodman.

SIP related - Food and Drink Manufacturing Event at Moray College UHI - Very successful event attracting approx. 20 employers. The workshops were very informative and included: the work of Scotland Food and Drink Academy, UHI CPD opportunities, Modern Apprenticeships and Business Accreditation (Investors In People). The attendees found the event very useful. Moray College UHI launched the draft of the first Continued Professional Development (CPD) catalogue aimed at the sector and will be undertaking the development of a range of CPD catalogue based on the SIP priorities.

UHI Preferred Providers status - 3 of the academic partners of UHI, Perth, Moray and Inverness are now preferred providers of Scotland Food and Drink Academy. This will allow the development of skills and improve links between education and industry.

World Host - roll out is building momentum and a few courses have been delivered by the trainers.

Invest in Youth Group - A sub group of the Employability Action Group has been established to develop a bid for the establishment of an Invest In Youth group for Moray. The aim of the Invest in Youth Groups will work to create a bridge between employers and education, providing a resource for teachers and practitioners, and encourage and support employers to recruit and train young people. The groups have to be led by industry.

Moray Skills Pipeline - European Funding - Expressions of interest were invited via Moray Council for the indicative award of £3million for the Skills Pipeline. The turnaround was very short over the Easter Holidays. 4 expressions of interest were received from Moray College UHI, Social Enterprise Academy and One Parent Families Scotland and 5 from Moray Council through the Employment Support Service. A first stage application multi partnership will now be submitted by Moray Council (contact Alan Weaver).

Education links with Industry: Johnston of Elgin project - 8 Young People (YP) from S5 have the opportunity to attend Johnstons to find out all about jobs and skills required to work there over 2 days. Johnstons are aiming to become world leader as a learning organisation.

Young people from Elgin Academy are going to Johnstons to teach staff on the use of Prezi instead of PowerPoint. 2 YP from Buckie High are going to Johnstons 3 days paid work developing videos for the company.

National Skills for Work Conversation day for Young People:

Takes place on the 3rd September at Elgin Town Hall. Pupils from the schools from as far as Inverness and Aberdeen will be bussed in to attend the event.

Events:

Moray College UHI Open Evening - takes place on the **9th June 5pm - 6.30pm** for anyone interested in applying for further or higher education part or full time. Staff from all academic areas will be there to discuss options. Student services, finance and various support services will also be in attendance.

Scottish Apprenticeship Week (18-20 May)

An event is being held at Hendry Hydraulics who are recruiting apprentices. The event is being held on the 20th May between 3pm - 6pm. Local case studies for apprentices have been forwarded to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and will feature in publicity material for the week. MEP Media Services have prepared Media release to showcase Moray Council Modern Apprentices.

Jobsfayre 2015 - Moray Jobs and You

The Moray Jobs and You event took place on the 18th April at the Alexander Graham Bell Centre attended by 25 businesses from the private, public and voluntary sectors. The event attracted over 120 people and the evaluation feedback was very positive.

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Development

- [Central Elgin Regeneration Public Design Charrette](#)

In the Oct – Dec 2014 quarterly update, the background to a Mini Charrette involving key stakeholders was reported. It was also advised that a consultant team had been appointed by The Moray Council on behalf of the Moray Economic Partnership partly funded by the Council and Scottish Government, to facilitate a Public Design Charrette.

This project involves the production of a masterplan, action plan, and financial appraisal for the regeneration of Central Elgin, including the existing City Centre, Lossie Green and Cooper Park, by means of an intensive consultation, engaging Community Planning Partners, and others in the business and wider community.

The delivery of this project is a key element of the 'Elgin – City for the Future' strategy, which in turn is central to 'The Moray Economic Strategy'.

On 29 January 2015 masterplan workshops were held by the consultant team, to address key issues including the potential contribution of Culture and Tourism, and Cooper Park, and were an important preparatory stage for the Public Charrette, which took place during 2 – 5 March.

The Public Charrette team engaged with the local community in developing a masterplan, the initial results of which were included in a public presentation on 19 March. It is intended to present a report on the Public Charrette to The Council in August and thereafter to the Community Planning Board.

It will address and help to coordinate the following projects originally identified in the Action Plan of the Moray Economic Strategy:-

- 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 coordinated by the MEP Development Programme Group, and developed with reference to other Programme Groups, and in particular Tourism and Culture, and Transportation.

The resulting masterplan/action plan and Development Brief will provide a proposition which can be used to market specific investment and development opportunities, which can contribute to the regeneration of Central Elgin.

- An update on consideration of the provision of an all weather football facility in Central Elgin, which is of relevance for the MES as one of the sites being proposed incorporates land at Lesser Borough Briggs, which would otherwise have potential development value in terms of the Charrette, will be included in the quarterly update for April to June 2015.
- A report on a proposed commercial development at Bogton Road, Forres, including potential relocation of Forres Mechanics FC, is to be presented to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in August or September 2015. This will be informed by property and legal advice which is due by May.
- The consultant's report for the development and expansion of Buckie Harbour was received in January, and the draft masterplan approved by The Council's Economic Development Committee on 10 February. It was announced on 26 February that MORL had been unsuccessful in gaining government subsidy through the contract for difference regime, although the wind farm developer has advised that it will be bidding again in October. In the meantime The Council and HIE has undertaken an exercise to capture all the actions required to advance promotion of Buckie Harbour and associated Economic Development opportunities. Work is being undertaken on preparation of a Buckie proposition customised to the offshore wind industry, based on discussion with the wind farm developer.

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Transportation

- **Developments at Buckie Harbour:** 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 support for harbour-related activities. It is anticipated that these will be completed by the end of May 2015. Discussions are ongoing with potential operators for the shipyard. It is anticipated that HIE and Moray Council will commission a market survey of shipbuilding and maintenance facilities and then seek design proposals for an upgrade on the shipyard with costs. A harbour management plan is to be approved by the Council on 10 February 2015 providing a framework with options on securing growth for indigenous businesses as well as opportunities for future development. Buckie harbour has been shortlisted by Moray Offshore Renewables Ltd (MORL) for the Operations & Maintenance (O&M) contract. The MORL field was not successful in securing the Contract for Difference (CfD) however they have indicated that they will be entering into the next CfD round with an announcement on the successful projects being awarded expected by the end of March 2016.
- **Dualling of the A96:** Work by the Transport Scotland design team and their consultants is continuing. There was a liaison meeting with Local Authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships in April 2014 and in September to discussing the junction, lay-by, rest area and non motorised user strategies. A further meeting was carried out in March 2015 and a series of workshops expected in the spring of this year on the timescales.
- **A95 Craigellachie to Aviemore:** HITRANS have contributed £30k 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. Consultation has already been carried out and a draft plan has been produced. The next steps will be to submit the study to Transport Scotland to coincide with publicity.
- **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. These are subject to the Lossiegreen master plan which is underway.
- **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. 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. Committee on 10 February 2015 agreed to extend Dial a Bus providing a service from Tomintoul to Grantown.

- A public transport guide has been produced for the Moray Area.

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Inward Investment and Business Growth

- **Buckie Harbour:** Moray Council and HIE met with [EDP Renewables](#) (EDPR) in March and established good contacts. The [Moray Offshore Renewables Ltd](#) (MORL) field was unsuccessful in securing the Contract for Difference in the current round, however it is EDPR's intention to resubmit a revised bid in the next round later this year. Moray Council and HIE are working with EDPR to ensure that they have the information required for a strong bid. Moray Council and HIE have met with a number of companies over the period to advance various aspects of the project. A meeting has also been held with the Scottish Government to update them on progress and to start to identify funding sources for the investment required. Further work will now be required to prepare an investment case.
- **Enterprise Park Forres (EPF).** Despite one company leaving Horizon Scotland in the last month, the building continues to be fully let as a new tenant has been found. AccuNostics went into administration, currently the company is still in the hands of the administrator, however a number of companies have already expressed interest in the building if it should become available. A planning consultant has been appointed to advise on the next phase of development at EPF. This work will take place over the next 3 months. HIE continues to work with Moray Council to ensure that unauthorised encampments are moved on quickly.
- **Inward Investment:** There continues to be a healthy interest in Moray as a location for business. These enquiries are principally in the Oil and Gas and Life Science sectors. The [Energy North](#) event went ahead and was attended by over 60 individuals, however the focus was on Renewable Energy rather than Oil and Gas. Further work will be done to bring an Oil and Gas event to Moray.
- **Spaceport:** The MOD has said that it will not be putting the property at Kinloss Barracks forward to the Department for Transport as a [possible Spaceport location](#) as it is required for operational reasons. MEP intends to continue to lobby to have this decision reversed as partners believe that Kinloss has a very strong case as a location for a UK Spaceport.

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