

Moray Economic Strategy (MES)
Quarterly Update from Programme Groups
July to September 2015

Board and Media

At its meeting 24 September the Moray Economic Partnership board considered:

- Proposals to seek funding from the EU via the Scottish Government to support Strategic Interventions addressing Employability also Poverty and Social Inclusion. The Moray Council would be lead partner and a funding proposal will need to be considered by the Council.
- An action plan with short, medium and long-term actions to address the findings of the Elgin Town Centre Charrette.
- A report on progress of the Tourism and Culture Programme of the Economic Partnership; and
- Campaign action to secure improvements to the A95 as identified in the study carried out for the partnership by Jacobs. The study has been submitted to Transport Scotland.

Media releases during this period included items:

- The value of Moray's Food and Drink contribution to the Scottish Economy in relation to 2015 Scotland's Year of Food Drink (Scotsman & N Scot);
- The value of local Social Enterprises in Moray (Social Enterprise Awards);
- Moray Business Week, "Save the Day"
- Publication of Macbeth Visitor Film Guide;
- Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere, Elgin's Heritage
- Domestic Heaven and Hell Exhibition at Elgin Museum
- Publication of Moray and Aberdeenshire Pevsner Guide,

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Tourism and Culture

- The World Premier of the new Macbeth film was shown in Edinburgh on 2nd October. As the result of a year-long collaboration between Moray Speyside Tourism, Visit Scotland and Studio Canal the costumes from the film will be on display in Visitor Information Centres, Moray Arts Centre and Brodie Castle. Extensive publicity for Moray in UK media was achieved.
- Moray Speyside Tourism staff are working together with Moray Council on promotion of Moray as a film location.
- WorldHost Customer Service Training will be promoted as part of the Moray Business Week.
- The Moray Cultural Strategy stakeholders' group is developing a proposal for an application for Place Partnership funding from Creative Scotland. It will be based on the key strategic themes of Health and Wellbeing, Accessible Cultural Experiences for every community, a Dynamic and Authentic cultural

offering and Thriving Creative Businesses. This will be an ambitious project requiring evidence of financial and in kind participation from delivery partners.

- A review of Visitor Information provision in Moray is being undertaken and a new strategy will be developed in partnership with Visit Scotland which will reflect increasing use of digital media by visitors.

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Skills and Training

Moray Skills Pipeline - European Funding – There is limited progress with the funding applications for both Employability and Social Inclusion and Poverty. A presentation took place at the MEP on the 25th September to advise about both bids and the MEP were in principal supportive of the projects. The Employability bid includes 9 projects with a potential investment of just over £2 million for skills investment in Moray. This project is due to be presented to the Moray Council Policy and Resources Committee in January 2016.

Group Membership – The group now includes Councillor Sonya Warren as Community Champion and Dave McCallum who has been appointed as the SDS area manager for Moray, Orkney and Shetland and will be the new chair for the Skills and Training Group.

Moray Economic Strategy – the programme group has considered input for the refreshed document.

Invest in Youth Group – The bid, led by the Moray Chamber of Commerce to create an Invest in Youth Group for Moray has been submitted to the Scottish Government for initial comment. It is hoped that this will be progressed before the end of the year. The bid for 4 years funding [1st year funded by Moray Council] will provide resource for 2 full time posts. 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.

Equalities Challenge Fund – Moray College UHI in partnership with Moray Council have been awarded funding from Skills Development Scotland to develop a project aimed at increasing awareness of Equalities within Modern Apprenticeships. The project which takes place between September – March will involve training providers, employers and young people and focuses on equalities linked to young people with disabilities, care leavers and addressing gender inequalities within some sectors. The project will focus particularly on gathering case studies and reporting on best practise to influence future practises.

Work Based Learning Hub for the Highlands and Islands – this hub has been created to address skills development across the HIE area particularly Apprenticeships including Foundation and Higher level apprenticeships. The hub will provide a coordination and facilitation role in a collaborative effort to reduce youth

unemployment through an increased work-based focus in education provision. *The Hub* will co-ordinate a regional response to the Government's Youth Employment Strategy, building capacity for meaningful school/employer/college partnerships that will underpin the Highlands and Islands' future work-based senior phase provision. Working closely with employers and sector skills councils, the Hub and its members will build on well-established linkages between post-compulsory education provision and future employment opportunities, mapping career paths that provide flexibility of access, engage young people at an early stage and avoid dead ends.

The hub has been developed by UHI in partnership with Skills Development Scotland.

Career Ready – A new cohort of young people have been selected and met their mentors. Businesses taking part includes Moray College UHI, ATOS, Bank of Scotland, Johnston's of Elgin, Diageo and Walkers Shortbread. Career Ready offers young people from all Moray schools S5 to work with industry for 2 years including a 4 week paid internship.

Events

Moray Business Week takes place 2nd – 6th week of November. There are over 20 events taking place cross Moray delivered by a range of partners. The events will cover Modern Apprenticeships, the value of Creative talent, business growth, the value of Digital media etc.

Learning Through Work Week takes place week of the 16th November and will involve schools, employers and Skills Development Scotland in promoting the value of Modern Apprenticeships including the new Foundation apprenticeships. Each school in Moray will be invited to develop an activity related the MA's.

Moray Careers Fayres – take place Tuesday 10th and Thursday 12th November in Buckie High School and Elgin Town Hall. Pupils for all Moray School S4 – S6 will attend the events.

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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'.

In the Jan – March 2015 quarterly update, reference was made to the Public Charrette programme during that period, and that it would address and help coordinate an appropriate number of projects originally identified in the Action Plan of The Moray Economic Strategy and listed in that update. These projects are to be coordinated by the MEP Development Programme Group, and developed with reference to other programme groups.

The consultant team briefed representatives of MEP partners and Community groups on the emerging report on the Central Elgin Regeneration – Public Design Charrette, on 30 May.

A report on the Public Charrette including action plan for 9/15 – 8/16 was presented to the Council's ED&I Committee on 25th August and to the MEP Board on 24 September 2015.

A report on a proposed commercial development at Bogton Road, Forres, including potential relocation of Forres Mechanics FC, was to have been presented to the Council in September 2015. Continued discussions between the Council's property consultant and the developer has delayed receipt of the consultant's report and a report to the Council's ED&I Committee.

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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. There has been a delay in this project being completed due to contractual issues. However it is now expected that these units will be available to let in November 2015
- Discussions are ongoing with potential operators for the shipyard. A stage 2 contaminated land survey is being carried with a subsequent property valuation before negotiations can commence.
- A harbour management plan was 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. The Council submitted a request for proposal to Moray Offshore Renewables Ltd. (MORL) and subsequent discussions have resulted in alternative options being developed. It is anticipated that there will be announcement on the preferred port by the end of 2015.
- The government have delayed the announcement of the next round of Contract for Difference (CfD), but EDP Renewables are still hopeful that an award on CfD can be issued by quarter 2 2016.

- **Dualling of the A96:** Work by the Transport Scotland design team and their consultant is continuing. A consultation road show was carried out by Transport Scotland in May 2015. The Council submitted a response to Transport Scotland recent consultation following stage 1 process.
- **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 Lossie green 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. The cycleway will run along the full length of the floodworks embankment running East - West through Elgin, and extend 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. The Council has introduced a point to point service from Tomintoul to Grantown using the Dial a Bus a service and proposes to use existing capacity on a social care service from Tomintoul to Keith to be made available for public use.
- A public transport guide has been produced for the Moray Area.

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Inward Investment and Business Growth

- **Buckie Harbour:** A decision on the Contract for Difference (CfD) continues to be delayed holding up progress by EDP Renewables on selecting a preferred port. A meeting has been held with Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE), the developer of the Beatrice Offshore Wind Ltd (BOWL) field regarding the use of Buckie as a base for construction work and as a contingency port for Operations & Maintenance (O&M) work. A workshop is being set up with the developer. Work continues on identifying an

operator/purchaser for the former shipyard site. Work continues on securing land at March Road to allow the expansion of the March Road industrial estate. Work is now commencing to identify potential value adding projects to support the development of the harbour as a centre for Offshore Energy activity in the Moray Firth.

- **Enterprise Park Forres (EPF).** HIE intend to progress to secure planning permission in principal for the next phase of development of the Enterprise Park over the next 10 years. One further unit has been let, with the tenant occupying the unit in December. There continues to be a healthy level of interest in the park.
- **Inward Investment:** The first draft of an Oil and Gas specific proposition has been received. This aim to target companies with significant numbers of staff commuting out of Moray to Aberdeen to set up an operation in Moray.
- **Commercial Property:** No new activity to report.

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