

Moray Economic Strategy (MES) Quarterly Update from Programme Groups October to December 2015

Board and Media

At its meeting 10 December the Moray Economic Partnership board considered:

- A report from Highlands and Islands Enterprise outlining research into the attitudes and aspirations of young people in the Highlands and Islands including Moray. Outlining possible actions to help address people retention;
- A report from the Moray Council regarding the performance indicators for 2014-15 compiled for Scottish Local Authority Economic Development (SLAED). The report provides information that highlights the contribution of local authorities to support economic development;
- Options to maintain media services to promote Moray and the partnership during 2016/17;
- A report on progress of the Development & Inward Investment Group which has been combined into one programme group from two;
- The Board was advised that the Community Planning Board required it to submit outcome targets in February to extend the 10 year plan to 2026
- The Board resolved to write to the MOD following the SDSR to see if there was a material change in its position regarding the potential reuse of any surplus land at Kinloss as a Spaceport or other uses to benefit the economy.
- The partners were prompted to take steps to support Scottish Apprentice Week Feb 29- March 4, 2016; and
- Notified that Moray Speyside Tourism would be holding a Tourism Summit in March (24).

Media releases during this period included items:

- Moray Ghosts and Witches (Halloween) three events from the Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere project
- Moray as home of the real Macbeth to support visits by international journalists hosted by Moray Speyside Tourism and Visit Scotland
- Display of costumes from the film Macbeth across Moray museums and arts centres, and at Johnston's of Elgin
- 2nd Annual Moray Business Week
- Victorian Christmas, event from the Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere project
- Review of events and festivals put on in Moray during 2015 to support the visitor economy
- Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere events planned for January 2016
- Flood Alleviation – (Scotsman)

Additionally media services have worked with the Council's Transportation services to devise a campaign to promote A95 Route Improvements. An information pack for journalists has been produced and adapted as a page on the Council's website to promote inward investment. PR and marketing support for Moray Business Week, work with contractors to produce Moray Christmas Campaign advert broadcast on STV 30 times between December 7 and 25, and work with contractors and high schools on the "Say Moray" campaign to be completed Spring 2016.

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Tourism and Culture

1. Moray Speyside Tourism update

- Growth Fund (Visit Scotland funding for development of MST priorities)
- Larder guide complete, to be printed and distributed Feb 16.
- Cycling – guide now on our web site. Will be printed and distributed
- Forres area – guide is with the printer
- Coastal guide in preparation
- Adventure – an adventure/activity group has formed
- Tourism Summit 24 March. Interesting programme. Will include the premiere of three videos matching MST priority themes
- Preparations under way for VisitScotland Expo. 6 stands have been reserved for Moray
- Macbeth - Costumes exhibitions now over; costumes returned to Studio Canal though we may get them back again
- DVD released – movie map accompanies it
- VisitBritain has included Moray Speyside in its Shakespeare anniversary marketing activity. We have helped them by correcting our description to read ‘home of the real Macbeth’ and changing our location on the map from the midlands
- Digital Tourism project – successful proposal to HIE for us to take on the co-ordination/championing of this project in the Moray Speyside area.

2. WorldHost

Activity is being focussed on Elgin with help from Elgin BID. It is anticipated that Elgin will be awarded WorldHost Destination status early in 2016.

3. Moray Place Partnership

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.

The proposal from Moray has got through Round 1 of the Creative Scotland application process. Further consultation will take place during early 2016.

4. 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. Discussions are ongoing with Moray Council, Visit Scotland and MST.

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Skills and Training

Moray Skills Pipeline - European Funding

No progress reported as at end of December. 9 projects in the pipeline.

Moray Economic Strategy review – This will now be put on hold until decisions are made about the new proposal for Employability Moray.

Moray Business Week – a very successful week of events took place at the beginning of November. Key highlights included the 'Value of Creative Talent', Chamber Awards, Grow your own Talent, Making Digital Work Workshop. Evaluation will take place in due course.

Equalities Challenge Fund – An Employer Business Breakfast takes place at the end of January aimed at getting employers involved with the Equalities agenda with a view to encouraging them to take on young people facing barriers on the MA programme.

Foundation Apprenticeships – Bids will be invited by SDS for a number of FA approved frameworks early in 2016. Moray College UHI will be offering the FA in Healthcare and pathfinder pilot for Hospitality. Engineering FA is currently under review but may also be offered. Foundation apprenticeships are open to young people in school S4 – S6 and aim to encourage more young people and their families to look at apprenticeships as a viable career option. This is part of the Invest in young people agenda.

Invest in Youth Group – the bid has been submitted to the SG for review. It is proposed that a sub group of Employability Moray will be established to manage this agenda along with one for Skills Investment and Lifelong learning.

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

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Development and Inward Investment Group

- **Central Elgin Action Plan - 2015/16**

At its meeting on 24 September 2015 the Moray Economic Partnership Board considered and agreed a report that set out Central Elgin Action Plan comprising 12 individual projects to be project managed over the next 12 months as part of a rolling programme of initiatives.

The 12 projects cover 3 main themes:

- Regeneration & Re-Use of Buildings/Assets
- Orientation & Connectivity
- More Reasons to Visit Elgin

Projects plans have now been produced for each project with Lead Officers being assigned as well as a Project Initiation Document being agreed to assist with Implementation of the Action Plan.

- **Buckie Harbour**

Progress with Buckie Harbour developments continues to be held up due to delays with Contract for Difference (CfD) announcement regarding the MORL development. Discussions with Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE) have continued however we understand that they are in the process of signing a HoT with Wick for the siting of the O&M base. SSE have complimented Moray Council on the quality of their proposition and speed of response. The main factor however seems to have continued to be the proximity of Wick to the development. Moray Council staff continue to be in contact with SSE and are hopeful of attracting some of the construction phase business (5 year project) to the port.

- **Development of Industrial Land at March Road, Buckie**

It has provisionally been agreed that 18 acres of land will be transferred to the Council and this was anticipated to be completed by the middle of November 2015.

- **Barmuckity Business Park, Elgin**

A project plan has been pulled together and discussions with the land owner/agent continue to be progressed. The project group has been extended to include representatives from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE).

- **Moray Sports Centre**

A number of Sports Centre Projects have been proposed across Moray and it was acknowledged that there was potential for future collaboration between these individual centres.

- **Forres Enterprise Park (EPF)**

On update on future potential growth of the Park was discussed and a potential future planning application in principle for a range of small, medium and large units is being considered by HIE. A gym/lifestyle facility opened in January 2016 with a number of enquiries being received about units and land for development. There is currently a healthy level of interest in the units on the park, with two units being at advanced Head of Terms discussions.

- **Mansfield House**

A feasibility study is being prepared by HIE to develop the property into a business centre.

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Transportation

Developments at Buckie Harbour: Work is now completed 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.

- 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.
- The Council responded to a request from BOWL to facilitate O&M and C&C at Buckie Harbour. At this point no decision has been made on securing any of this work at Buckie. This is expected by the end of March 2016 which is when BOWL has to go to financial close.
- The government have delayed the announcement of the next round of Contract for Difference (CfD), but have indicated that this would be awarded by the end of 2016. MORL have indicated that they would announce their preferred port before CfD is awarded.

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. Transport Scotland will engage consultants in Spring 2016 at which point discussions will start with TS and consultants on route options.

• **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. The study has been submitted to Transport Scotland and a series of lobby and publicity campaigns will start in February 2016.

• **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.

• **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 and is expected to be finished by Spring 2016.

• **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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