

## **Moray Economic Strategy – Implementation Programme Status Update June to September 2013**

### **Overall**

- John Cowe has been confirmed by the Community Planning Partnership as the Chair of the Moray Economic Partnership and the Chair of the Moray Strategic Business Forum (James Johnston) as the Vice Chair. John takes over from local businessman Jim Royan as Chair.
- A media centre “newsroom” has been purchased by members of the partnership to provide as a single point of information that will identify Moray as a place to live work and invest and about implementation of the Moray Economic Strategy. The newsroom is presently being built for population with information; partners will have the ability to put information on the newsroom about themselves and their activities. The newsroom should be available towards the end of September. A contract to provide this service for 2 years has been signed.
- Tenders for a media service provider will be evaluated mid September with the intention to appoint a media service provider to support the Moray Economic Partnership with engagement and communications including media releases. The contract will be from October 2013 to March 2015.
- Project plans for the prioritised programmes are being drawn up including the identification of milestones and risks.
- The suite of performance indicators to measure progress on key outcomes of the strategy will be reviewed in the autumn including making an assessment of overall risk of non delivery to the implementation of the strategy.

### **Tourism and Culture**

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

- A new strategy for tourism development with proposal that implementation should be led by Moray Chamber of Commerce has been agreed with MEP. This will involve expansion of Moray Chamber of Commerce and employment of 1.5FTE specialist staff, and funding from the public sector. A business plan is being developed now, with consultancy support partially funded by HIE, which will identify funding required, currently estimated at being around £150K over 3 years.
- HIE is likely to be the lead funding organisation, but it is anticipated that a request for support for years 2 and 3 will be made to the Moray Council.

**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.
- Development of 100 room hotel in Elgin. The Culture and Tourism and Development Groups are working jointly towards establishing interest in North Port site identified in Elgin City for the Future.

**Project: Visitor Orientation**

- The C&T Group and the Skills Group have met with People 1<sup>st</sup> to learn about the World Host Destination Programme which provides customer care training and accreditation. There is great potential to increase tourism business through this medium, and the groups are now engaging with Associated Schools Groups (ASGs) area representatives with a view to developing a county-wide scheme leading to Moray being a World Host Destination.
- Forres Area Community Trust is already planning training for its businesses.
- The strategy for tourism development describes a visitor pathway which can be used by visitor information points to assist tourists to enjoy Moray's range of experiences from coastal to mountainous areas. Information package to be developed for Visitor Information Points.
- The Malt Whisky Trail is a significant component of the pathway, and HIE is working with MWT to enhance the visitor experience provided by the MWT.
- Elgin BID has made progress with this through its Visitor Information Point partnerships with retail businesses and looking at potential partnership with the St Giles Church.

**Project: New Arts School/Centre**

- The C&T Group held a consultative meeting in Elgin on 30<sup>th</sup> July with representatives of local businesses involved with art and cultural activity. Moray Council staff, Creative Scotland, tsiMORAY and Richard Lochhead MSP also attended. The need for a large facility together with local more local centres was strongly supported.
- Meetings have been held with National Trust for Scotland (NTS) over future development at Brodie Castle.

**Project: Town Hall Feasibility Assessment**

- C & T and Development Groups working together on this priority.

**Project: Regional Sports Facility**

- Whilst not a priority project for the C&T Group, it has been discussed and we see merit in making more use of existing resources such as the new Elgin academy and the large gymnasium at Kinloss Barracks to provide centres of excellence for a range of sports.

## Skills and Training

- The Skills and Training group has been through a period of staff change. There is a new chair – Frances Webster (SDS) in place of Anthony Standing who moves to the CPP. Tom McGarry from Moray College UHI has moved onto the MEP and the programme manager position has been replaced by Jacqui Taylor, Head of Marketing and External Relations at Moray College UHI. Councillor Barry Jarvis remains as the Community Champion and the representative from the Employability Action Group is Joe Bodman.
- The last meeting of this group took place on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August. The members decided it would be advantageous to review the priority plan and update on what had been achieved to date. It was also noted that there the some priorities were not necessarily relevant now and they will be removed and some new priorities to be added.
- It has been officially proposed that the Employability Action Group will be a sub group of the Skills and Training Group. The Skills and Training group will be responsible for the direction of this group in line with the identified priorities.
- Projects achieved to date: Skills Pipeline has been produced and disseminated. Gaps in provision will be identified by the end of September.
- 2 related events - Business2schools - the 6<sup>th</sup> September which will include local business and schools. Economic Growth – Business to Education workshop is being held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September. Reps from the group will attend and feed outcomes into the priority plan.
- An education rep will attend the next meeting to discuss how to form better links between the priorities and the work of the STG and the education department and clarify roles and responsibilities.

## Development

- Scottish Government Civil Servants to visit Buckie harbour in September to look at potential for renewables and ancillary development.
- Buckie harbour SMEs, ERDF funding in place for development of accommodation. Risk currently being assessed. A strategic review of Buckie harbour and potential for offshore wind farm operations and maintenance (O&M) is being undertaken by HIE due in September.
- On August 13 the Elgin Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme [was launched](#) The £3.3million scheme has secured funding from Historic Scotland, Moray Council, City of Elgin Business Improvement District (BID) and the Elgin Fund to carry out essential repairs and improvements to the city centre over the next five years. The Elgin Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) will provide grants to help business and property owners/occupiers with the cost of external repairs for identified priority

buildings and closes, other historic buildings in need of repair and for shop front improvements.

- The development group and the T&C group held an initial discussion to agree collaboration across programme boundaries in relation to the preparation of a master plan for the development of Lossie Green. A scope for the master plan is scheduled to be prepared for October
- Elgin Flood Alleviation and Forres Pilmuir Flood Alleviation schemes under construction

## Transportation

- Lifting the Spirit Launch Friday 13 September 2013. The pilot project starts with the first train on 4 September 2013 from Elgin. It is proposed to operate 2 trains per week to gain an indication of the benefits, including cost, environmental and safety. Freight operator has been identified and funding secured.
- Develop Bus Links between Moray and Central Belt – bid from Council bus operator/HITRANS has been unsuccessful. It was noted that HITRANS recognised that this would create economic benefits for Moray but unfortunately it was not seen as a priority compared with other applications. However, it is hoped that a second round may be available next year and a further bid would be re-submitted.
- Developments at Buckie Harbour – A first draft of a feasibility study by Highlands and Islands Enterprise of O&M operations from Buckie harbour has been completed and discussions have commenced with Scottish Government on opportunities for Buckie to provide an O&M base.
- Transport Scotland will provide a presentation to Economic Development & Infrastructure Services Committee on 3 September 2013 on the process for dualling the A96.
- Upgrade plans for Aberdeen/Inverness route included in the Network Rail Strategic Business Plan (SBP) 2012 outlined for Control Period 5 2014-2019. It is anticipated that one of the early elements of this programme would be a new rail station at Dalcross.

## Inward Investment and Business Growth

- Inward Investment propositions: “*Live Work Relax Moray*” material is currently being developed to help attract people to come and work in Moray. The Moray Proposition Material and Inward Investment work to date is being reviewed in September as it has been in use now for over 12 months. This work will be done by HIE with support from a consultant. HIE will have a presence at Offshore Europe in Aberdeen, with a view to attracting more oil and gas activity to Moray.
- Barmuckity (Elgin) Business Park: Currently we are waiting for the developer to confirm that the last outstanding element has been completed before legal

agreements are concluded. It is expected that this will be carried out over the next 3 months.

- Identification of Expansion Land: The master planning exercise for the remaining undeveloped phases of Forres Enterprise Park has commenced, with all Stakeholders being invited to a workshop in August. A study has been commissioned to identify the opportunities for Buckie Harbour presented by Offshore Wind O&M activity alongside existing business opportunities. This is due to report in September.
- Forres Enterprise Park: Unit 10 is now complete as a shell and core building, and HIE are in the final stages of putting in place a Development Agreement with a tenant for Unit 11, which will see the building fitted out as 13,600 sqft of manufacturing and office space.