

Moray Economic Strategy (MES) Quarterly Update Oct to Dec 2014

Overall

At its meeting December 11, the partners considered the [Moray Cultural Strategy](#) endorsed the approach recommended by the Strategy and agreed to engage in concerted actions to deliver development of culture in Moray.

The partners also considered the Highlands and Islands [Regional Skills Investment Plan](#) and agreed to oversee the preparation of and delivery of a local response plan lead by the Skills and Training Programme; and to engage in concerted actions to deliver a local response plan.

The partners provided input to consultants Jacobs undertaking a study to identify potential improvements to the A95.

On October 3, the partnership provided a response to a consultation by the Department for Transport on the Civil Aviation Authority's proposed criteria for the location of a UK spaceport. With 2 out of 8 of the potential locations in Moray at Kinloss Barracks and RAF Lossiemouth the partnership has coordinated a response for the community to the Department for Transportation Consultation on criteria to determine the location of a UK spaceport. By 2030 the global space economy is expected to be worth £400billion per annum. The government's ambition is that the UK's space economy should account for 10% of the global economy by 2030- worth some £40billion per annum.

During this quarter a working group has been formed to support the development of a bid for a UK Spaceport to be located in Moray. A plan has been devised to engage with key stakeholder and decision makers. In the interim HM Government is devising a process for bidding and decision making. No decision is anticipated before the General Election

A consultant team was appointed by The Moray Council, on behalf of the MEP, to facilitate a public [design charrette for Central Elgin](#). Planning and Design workshops will be held in St Giles Church over a four day period running from 2-5 March 2015. The local community, designers and specialists will work together to prepare a long term vision, development framework and action plan for the Lossie Green and Cooper Park area.

Communications during this period have included items published in the Herald, Scotsman and Northern Scot including quotes from the MEP. Articles and features about rolling out across Moray Speyside the World host customer service training for SMEs in the service and tourism sectors funded by Skills Development Scotland; Wild bird Films projection of short films onto 50 windows on Elgin High Street; the publication of a digital advent calendar highlighting the links between Moray and Christmas; features in the Scotsman about the products from Moray that are synonymous with Christmas and the New Year; Moray as home to the Real Macbeth as well as recognising the successful partnership between Moray Council, the Business Gateway Service and the Scottish Government to help over 100 young people into employment with Moray SMEs through the Youth Employment Scotland

scheme, during 2014. Articles also reflected the annual business summit hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and the inaugural Moray Business Week supported by all Moray business support organisations and last but not least looked to the future outlining the opportunity presented by securing Moray as the location for a UK Spaceport.

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Tourism and Culture

- **Moray has been named as the top destination for tourists renting holiday properties in the UK over the last year.** Popular travel site 'TripAdvisor' named Moray as the best place to be for holiday rentals – topping several well known destinations including the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.
- Intense promotion of WorldHost is planned for the second half of April, with courses to be made available across Moray.
- An application for Visit Scotland Growth Funding is being submitted. If successful grant assistance will allow implementation of a long term marketing framework for Moray Speyside.
- Moray Speyside will be represented by 3 stands at the Tourism Expo to be held in April, in Aberdeen.
- Collaboration between Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership, Aberdeenshire continues, focussing on coastal activities including cycling.
- Moray Speyside will be hosting a Tourism Summit in April, with assistance from Visit Scotland.
- MEP has endorsed the Moray Cultural Strategy. The Strategy will be launched on 26th March in Alexander Graham Bell Centre by Janet Archer, CEO of Creative Scotland. The launch event will be followed on the 27th March by a Culture Café Exchange led by Bodysurf Scotland in the same venue.

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Skills and Training

Due to other commitments the group has only met once since the last quarterly update. To date there is still no community champion attached to the group.

Highlands and Islands SIP - The Skills and training groups will be responsible for

the coordination of the local response to the SIP with a range of partners. This work will be taken forward in the next quarter.

SIP related - Food and Drink Manufacturing - an event will be held at Moray College UHI on the 26th March in relation to the development of a northern hub related to the Abertay Food and Drink Manufacturing Academy. This involves a range of other partners including SDS. In the meantime small, non- account managed businesses are being surveyed in preparation for the event.

World Host - dates have been agreed for a World Host 2 week Academy in April, which will accommodate the roll out of the training across Moray as part of the MPE tourism and culture group action plan. This is being supported by the STG.

Moray Skills Pipeline - European Funding - indicative award of £3million for Moray. Detailed application to be submitted

Employability and Skills Training - an award from previous EU funding has been given to college and Moray College UHI are running a number of courses aimed at individuals for which there is currently no mainstream provision. This refers to section **Priority 4, Supporting Skills Development in the Action plan.**

Contract awards for the new round of **MA and Employability Fund** have been called and results will be announced in late March. The Civil Service have announced that they will be recruited approx. 300 MA's across the UK.

Digital Skill Training - 'Get on Line' is being piloted by JCP in partnership with NHS to utilise the MIB bus to support people in their communicates to apply for jobs and benefits.

Events:

Jobsfayre 2015 - Moray Jobs and You

The Moray Jobs and You event will now take place on the 18th April at the Alexander Graham Bell Centre. There are a number of businesses who have confirmed their attendance along with Moray College UHI, Jobcentre and Skills Development Scotland, The Chamber are also involved with the organisation of the event. Students from Moray College UHI have been involved in the design of the logo. It is expected that there will be approx 30 stand holders from a range of industrial sectors.

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Development

The Elgin City Centre Masterplan - Central Elgin Regeneration: Public Design Charrette. In March 2014 a consultant team facilitated a two day mini-charrette for The Moray Council, on behalf of the Moray Economic Partnership (MEP). The event, part funded by the Scottish Government, focussed on the future vision for Lossie Green, Cooper Park and their relationship to other parts of the City Centre.

The Consultants' Report on the [Mini Charrette](#), was completed in August; a report on the key features and findings and way forward was presented to the Council's

Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 5 August 2014. A report illustrating how the production of a Masterplan and Development Brief for the Lossie Green area relates to key provisions of Moray 2023 A Plan For The Future, (The Ten Year Plan), was presented to the meeting of the MEP on 2 September 2014. The Scottish Government subsequently confirmed grant funding of £20,000 to further develop the work of the mini charrette by holding a public design charrette. This funding has been matched by the Council.

A consultant team has been appointed by The Moray Council, on behalf of the MEP, to facilitate the public design Charrette. A Charrette is an intensive consultation that engages local people in the design of their community. The fundamental aim is to involve local residents, business, and stakeholders in planning the future of Central Elgin. The Charrette will be part funded by the Scottish Government through their Charrette Mainstreaming Programme 2014-15.

The Charrette is to further inform the Elgin City Centre Masterplan, and include a more detailed financial appraisal. In January 2015, preparatory stakeholder workshops are scheduled to further inform the vision and feasibility of Arts, Civic, and Cultural and associated educational provision; and a strategy for the future planning of Cooper Park.

For the Charrette itself, Planning and Design workshops will be held in St Giles Church over a four day period running from 2-5 March 2015. The local community, designers and specialists will work together to prepare a long term vision, development framework and action plan for the Lossie Green and Cooper Park area.

To follow the project, briefing notes are posted at on the [project webpage](#)

The resulting Masterplan and related 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.

The development of the Masterplan will address and help to coordinate the following 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 were prepared, to inform discussions with a potential funder, and a meeting was requested.

However, the potential funder has advised that they will not be proceeding with this option for the foreseeable future. Still awaiting response from Elgin City FC as to their intentions given this.

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. Discussion ongoing, involving football club and developer which will inform consultants report.

Buckie Harbour. Assisting Transportation Group in making plans which may lead to development and expansion of harbour. Consultants have been commissioned to prepare a Masterplan, which is now at an advanced stage of preparation.

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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 March 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 MORL for the O&M contract. Key milestone will be the Contract for Difference being awarded expected 18 March 2015.
- **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 is to be arranged during February 2015 on route options for Elgin Bypass.
- **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.

- **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. Approval is sought by Committee 10 February 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:** The master plan exercise is now complete with a paper being submitted to the councillors on the 10th of February. A decision on the Contract for Difference is expected on or around the 26th of February. If MORL is successful then it is expected that the pace of the project will increase at this time. A meeting is being sought with EDPR to deliver the Buckie proposition during February.
- **Enterprise Park Forres:** A planning consultant is being appointed to advise on the development of the next phase of EPF, with planning applications expected to be submitted in 2015. Horizon Scotland is currently at 100% occupancy. A number of enquiries for units are being dealt with and negotiations on HoT agreement are underway for one unit.
- **Inward Investment:** There continues to be a healthy pipeline of enquiries, with negotiations underway with a number of companies in the Life Science, Energy and Engineering sectors. The Energy North event is now planned for spring 2015, with a kick off meeting being held on the 9th of February to plan the agenda for this event.

- **Spaceport:** HIE and Moray Council continue to work on development of material to support their submission. Currently no decision has been made by government on which sites will be asked to provide submissions. HIE and Moray Council staff recently attended an event in London where several useful contacts were made.

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