

Moray Economic Partnership

Tuesday 9 December 2025 (2.00pm 4.00pm – MS Teams)

Attendees:	
Sarah Medcraf (Chair)	Moray Chamber of Commerce (MCC)
Beverly Smith	The Moray Council (TMC)
Lorna Williamson	TMC
Michael Kelly	TMC
Marc Macrae	TMC
Sandy Keith	TMC
Sonya Warren	TMC
Mike Duncan	Federation of Small Business (FSB)
Angie Smith	Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)
Jackie MacLaren	tsiMoray
David Patterson	UHI Moray
David Jackson	Visit Scotland
Carol Wink (Minutes)	HIE

Apologies:	
Rhona Gunn	TMC
Gary Templeton	TMC
David Reid	HIE
Claire Sim	Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

1	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>Sarah Medcraf (Chair) opened the meeting.</p>
2	<p>Matters arising not on the agenda</p> <p>Sarah Medcraf reported that in October 2025 MEP members voted to approve the reallocation of UKSPF funding from St Giles Centre to support the Creative Arts Centre project within the former Gordon Arms Hotel on Elgin High Street.</p> <p>Sarah Medcraf reported that the five highland Chambers of Commerce are keen to have representation at Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP) and has written to the chair for a representative from the Chamber of Commerce network to join.</p> <p>Sarah Medcraf noted that the MEP year-end subgroup reports should be ready early 2026 after which the annual report can be drafted and presented to the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). Sarah will check with CPP to confirm if any additional briefing information is required.</p> <p>Action: Sarah Medcraf to check with CPP if the MEP annual report will be sufficient as a briefing or will additional information be required.</p>

	<p>Sarah Medcraf reported that since the previous meeting she has engaged with SSEN's transmission and distribution teams. A set of questions have been agreed for including in a business survey scheduled for next year.</p> <p>Lorna Williamson reported that the Skills Summit for Moray event held in December was a great success with good participation from a range of attendees. A roadmap will be developed to outline next steps. Consideration will be given to organising future events to include additional sectors.</p>
3	<p>Minute and actions from previous meeting</p> <p>The minute from the 4 September 2025 meeting was agreed.</p>
4	<p>Discussion on Approvals Required</p> <p>There were no items requiring approval.</p>
5	<p>Moray Growth Deal (MGD) Update</p> <p>Michael Kelly summarised current activity with the MGD projects.</p> <p>Construction works on the Manufacturing and Innovation Centre Moray (MICM) and the EY STEM projects are nearing completion. Elevator UK has been appointed as the operator for MICM and a manager is now in post to lead on service delivery and curriculum development for the EY STEM project. A ministerial launch is being planned for March 2026 for both facilities.</p> <p>Work has started on the re-development of Elgin Town Hall (ETH) with Taylor and Fraser being appointed as main construction contractor for the project.</p> <p>Efforts are ongoing to secure additional external funding for Grant Lodge.</p> <p>Work continues with partners to progress the skills project from its current outline proposal to a defined project mission statement then ultimately to develop a strategic outline business case.</p> <p>The remaining South Street development legal and contractual issues are being addressed and are expected to conclude soon, allowing construction works to start in early Q4.</p> <p>Work on drafting the MGD annual report will start in early January 2026.</p>
6	<p>Verbal discussion on private/public sector opportunities/challenges</p> <p>Grid Infrastructure</p> <p>Sarah Medcraf reported there are ongoing challenges relating to grid infrastructure and reiterated the importance of local government engagement.</p> <p>Angie Smith highlighted the recurring issues for investors and businesses, such as late-stage discovery of digital and energy constraints and the need for early engagement with utility providers during the planning process. She advised that SSEN's digital team offers a free support service for clients to identify energy</p>

	<p>solutions within grid constraints and highlighted the need to raise awareness of this resource amongst businesses.</p> <p>Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESP)/National Energy System Operator (NESO)</p> <p>Beverly Smith provided MEP members with a brief update on the Regional Energy Strategic Plan. A comprehensive plan will be developed for Scotland covering all energy types, including electricity, gas, hydrogen and heat networks. Working groups and boards will be established in due course, and representatives from local government bodies will be invited to participate.</p>
7	<p>Key Topic Focus</p> <p>Film and Gaming Industry</p> <p>Sarah Medcraf reported that during the recent MCC trade mission to New York, she met with the Vice President of NBC Studios. Building on the recent filming activity in the region, she raised whether there is appetite among partners to continue these discussions and explore how economic and tourism opportunities could be maximised. David Jackson highlighted that opportunities around screen tourism continue to grow. Last year, the sector's GVA was approximately £160 million – double the pre-Covid figure, driven by productions such as Outlander and Frankenstein. He noted that film and TV locations have been recognised as significant influencers of visitor behaviour with one in five visitors choosing a destination they have seen on screen. This proportion increases to 40% among international travellers. Beverly Smith advised that Moray Council's website includes a dedicated section for the film and television sector. Interested parties can find contact details for guidance on locations, facilities, and permissions within the region. From there, enquiries can be redirected to the appropriate team who will follow up accordingly.</p> <p>Beverly Smith reported that work is progressing on developing the tourism strategy and roadmap. A draft will be circulated to MEP partners for review, with the intention of presenting it to the Moray Council Committee early next year.</p> <p>David Patterson reported that the Moray Game Jam event will return to Elgin in March 2026, bringing together businesses, gaming enthusiasts, industry leaders, and educators from across the country. He also noted that several gaming businesses have successfully established themselves in Moray. Angie Smith highlighted the strong ambition within the gaming industry, emphasising its potential to create high-quality development roles as well as providing back-office support for other producers.</p> <p>Buckie Harbour</p> <p>Beverly Smith reported that work on Buckie Harbour redevelopment planning is ongoing and offered to provide an update to MEP members.</p> <p>Action: TMC to provide an update on Buckie Harbour redevelopment planning to MEP members.</p>

8	<p>AOB</p> <p>Sonya Warren raised the issue of the Moray Flow Park highlighting that there is a lot of concern within the community about the potential impact on sectors such as fishing and tourism and asked how developers plan to engage with communities. Beverly Smith advised there is currently no live consultation but proposals are available on the Moray Flow Park website. Any statutory process required would be carried out at the appropriate time.</p> <p>Sarah Medcraf noted NHS interest in joining MEP. MEP members agreed that public health and wellbeing are key to a strong economy. As outlined in the MEP Structure and Governance, organisations may be invited to attend when agenda items require their input. Consideration will be given to inviting NHS to join the Communities and Place sub-group.</p> <p>Sarah Medcraf reported that MCC is aware of some businesses who are willing to volunteer to carry out local improvement works and asked how this goodwill could be harnessed. Beverly Smith asked for details of businesses, with specific offers, to be forwarded to her. Lorna Williamson reminded MEP members about the new Community Identified Benefits Portal which lists opportunities for local organisations to sign up to. Sarah agreed that MCC would continue to promote the portal to their members through their newsletter.</p>
9	<p>Close</p> <p>Sarah Medcraf thanked everyone for their attendance and brought the meeting to a close.</p> <p>The 2026 MEP meeting schedule will be circulated to members early in the new year.</p>

Summary of actions	
MCC to check with CPP if the MEP annual report will be sufficient as a briefing or if additional information will be required.	MCC
Moray Council to provide an update on Buckie Harbour redevelopment planning to MEP members.	TMC