

Primary Policies

The Primary Policies reflect the priorities set out in Scottish Planning Policy and the objectives of the Council. These policies will be applied to all development proposals and used with the more detailed policies set out within the relevant sections to determine planning proposals.

The primary policies aim to support the Scottish Government's aims in terms of sustainable economic growth, climate change and placemaking.

PP1 Sustainable Economic Growth

The Local Development Plan identifies employment land designations to support requirements identified in the Moray Economic Strategy. Development proposals which support the Strategy and will contribute towards the delivery of sustainable economic growth and the transition of Moray towards a low carbon economy will be supported where the quality of the natural and built environment is safeguarded and the relevant policies and site requirements are met.

Justification:

The Moray Economic Strategy provides a long term strategy to influence decision makers in addressing the challenges in diversifying the economy of Moray. This includes the objectives for growth and inward investment in higher paid employment, to reduce the outmigration of young people and to reduce any dependency on public sector employment including the defence sector.

The aims of the strategy are to deliver population growth, create 5,000 jobs and raise earnings to above the Scottish average. The Strategy includes an Action Programme which identifies a programme of projects and enabling actions with a focus on improving regional infrastructure including, road, rail and air and broadband connectivity, opportunities to grow and diversify the economy in the sectors of life sciences, engineering, energy, food and drink and tourism. The Strategy and Action Programme also support the reinforcement of Elgin as a regional centre through the Elgin City for the Future Masterplan to support the towns of Buckie, Forres, Keith and Lossiemouth and the settlements of Speyside.

The aims of this policy must be balanced with the need to safeguard Moray's natural and built environment.

PP2

Climate Change

In order to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, developments of 10 or more houses and buildings in excess of 500 sq m should address the following:

- Be in sustainable locations that make efficient use of land and infrastructure,
- Optimise accessibility to active travel options and public transport,
- Create quality open spaces, landscaped areas and green wedges that are well connected,
- Utilise sustainable construction techniques and materials and encourage energy efficiency through the orientation and design of buildings,
- Where practical, install low and zero carbon generating technologies,
- Prevent further development that would be at risk of flooding or coastal erosion,
- Where practical, meet heat and energy requirements through decentralised and local renewable or low carbon sources of heat and power.
- Minimise disturbance to carbon rich soils and, in cases where it is agreed that trees can be felled, to incorporate compensatory tree planting.

Proposals must be supported by a Sustainability Statement that sets out how the above objectives have been addressed within the development. This policy is supported by supplementary guidance on climate change.

Justification

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 sets a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. To achieve this, new development will have to reduce energy and other resource requirements: reduce the need to travel and provide opportunities for active travel and travel by public transport. Development should be avoided in areas vulnerable to the effects of climate change like areas at significant risk of flooding, landslip and coastal erosion. Opportunities should be sought for natural flood management, which will bring inherent benefits for local habitats. The energy and heat requirements in new developments should where possible be met by decentralised and local renewable or low carbon sources.

All residential and commercial (business, industrial and retail) developments must incorporate the key principles of Designing Streets, Creating Places and the Council's supplementary guidance on Urban Design.

Developments should;

- create places with character, identity and a sense of arrival
- create safe and pleasant places, which have been designed to reduce the fear of crime and anti social behaviour
- be well connected, walkable neighbourhoods which are easy to move around and designed to encourage social interaction and healthier lifestyles
- include buildings and open spaces of high standards of design which incorporate sustainable design and construction principles
- have streets which are designed to consider pedestrians first and motor vehicles last and minimise the visual impact of parked cars on the street scene.
- ensure buildings front onto streets with public fronts and private backs and have clearly defined public and private space
- maintain and enhance the natural landscape features and distinctive character of the area and provide new green spaces which connect to green and blue networks and promote biodiversity
- The Council will work with developers and local communities to prepare masterplans, key design principles and other site specific planning guidance as indicated in the settlement designations.

Justification:

The Scottish Government aims to encourage higher standards of urban design and has published Designing Streets and Creating Places. The Council has approved supplementary guidance on urban design which developers are referred to.

The planning system encourages a designed approach to planning responding to the context and characteristics of each site. The 6 key qualities of distinctive, welcoming, adaptable, resource efficient, safe and pleasant and easy to move around and beyond should be considered and integrated into new developments.

Design statements are required for all major applications, however this approach is encouraged for all developments over 10 units to understand the proposal within the context of the site and surrounding environment.

Scottish Government policies encourage the creation of walkable neighbourhoods which are defined as neighbourhoods which have a range of facilities within 5 minutes (about 400 metres) walking distance of residential areas.

A Design and Access Statement is required for national and major planning applications and the Council encourages preparation of a Design Statement for all housing developments of 10 or more units and commercial developments in excess of 500 sq. metres.

