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Local Development Plan Process



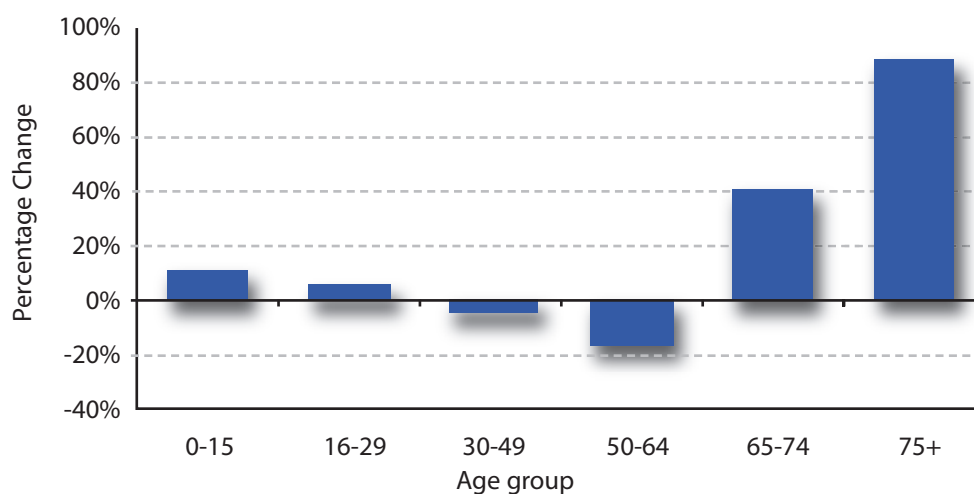
MAIN ISSUES REPORT

Key Influences

The Main Issues are identified and described by subject, and settlement later in this document. It is worth noting at this stage some “headline” matters that have taken place in the past 3 years, since the 2008 Plan was adopted, that will influence what has to be planned for in future years.

- The global economic downturn has affected development rates, and the take up of sites designated for development has not progressed as anticipated.
- The UK Government’s Strategic Defence Review announced the closure of RAF Kinloss and threatened the future of RAF Lossiemouth. The Army will now take over the Kinloss air station as a base for soldiers.
- A Moray Economic Strategy was commissioned, with a view to diversifying the economy, and making it less reliant on the Defence and Public Sectors. This represents the proposals of the Moray Community Planning Partnership for growing the Moray economy.
- Elgin City For the Future study has provided a masterplan for how Elgin should respond to development opportunities, and accommodate the development proposals of Community Plan Partners
- A Housing Needs and Demand Assessment has been completed, and identifies the numbers of new houses required to 2023. Over 78% of this demand is from households unable to purchase open market housing, and there is thus a large requirement for this to be met from affordable housing.
- Population levels have shown a slight rise, but the profile shows an aging population structure.

Percentage change in population in Moray 2010 - 2035 (2010-based projections)



Supporting Background Documents

A range of supporting background documents have been prepared to supplement this MIR document

- **Monitoring Report** looking at land take up, key events and policy performance since the adoption of the 2008 Plan.
- **Housing Need**, covering the outcome of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment; the amount of land for housing required to 2023; the proposed distribution of this by local housing market areas
- A “**capacity analysis**” of towns and villages, examining their scope to accommodate new development.
- A **site checklist**, which evaluates new sites being considered for development
- **Strategic Environmental Assessment**, which assesses any environmental impacts of any site or policy proposals.

These documents can be viewed at the Council’s web site www.moray.gov.uk

A cd (higher resolution) containing all documents can be obtained at a cost of £1 plus p & p.

Please contact developmentplans@moray.gov.uk or telephone 01343 563285

Vision for Moray

What would we like Moray to look like in 10-15 years time

Population

- To grow to a population of over 90,000 over the next 10 years, attracting new residents and young people into the area (current population estimate 87,700)



Economic

- That Moray is a vibrant 21st century region with a broad business base providing stable well paid employment, and strong communities with a growing population.
- To create 5,000 jobs in the wider economy, with focus on high quality jobs in engineering and science and technology, along with an increase in the employment base in long established sectors such as tourism; food and drink.
- To improve average earnings to, or above, regional and Scottish averages.
- To set roles for towns/areas, and identifying potential for growth and expansion, as identified by The Moray Economic Strategy.



Housing

- To allocate sufficient land designations to meet the requirements identified by the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment, and facilitate the provision of affordable housing.
- To have high quality residential environments that are attractive places in which to live; that embrace renewable energy; are energy efficient; contribute to reducing fuel poverty.
- To support low impact housing in the countryside, whilst protecting the character and visual appearance of rural areas.

Environment

- To maintain the high quality of Moray's environment, which is one of the area's prime assets.
- To create a policy context which supports growth and development, whilst protecting the natural and built heritage.
- To create attractive, sustainable places where people will wish to live and work, incorporating high quality design; green corridors and open spaces.
- To support renewable energy technologies and reduce carbon emissions in new developments.



Infrastructure

- To have good, efficient transport links to the rest of the country
- To improve traffic management within Elgin, and support its role as a growth centre
- To encourage active travel (walking and cycling) and to reduce the number of journeys made by car.

Delivery

In order to deliver this, the Local Development will have to:

- In order to deliver this, the Local Development Plan will have to
- Provide an adequate supply of land designated for development
- Be able to respond positively to economic development proposals
- Safeguard and protect the environmental qualities for which Moray is renowned
- Promote sustainable development; reduce the need to travel; provide alternatives to car use



Spatial Strategy

In considering how to accommodate and distribute the development that will be encouraged to take place to 2023, there would appear to be the following options, although these are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

- i) To focus development on existing settlements, with Elgin, Forres, Buckie, Keith and Lossiemouth as the main development areas
- ii) To promote the development of a new settlement where new growth would be concentrated, possibly in the A96 Elgin to Forres corridor.
- iii) To promote development outwith settlements, in countryside areas.

Option i) was that followed by the previous 2008 development plan, and remains the preferred method for directing development to take place, building on local centres.

Whilst Option ii) would provide an opportunity to “start from scratch”, it is not likely to be justified in terms of the likely levels of demand, and new facilities and infrastructure required.

Option iii) would result in the promotion of excessive amounts of development in countryside areas, likely to be visually unacceptable and inefficient in terms of service provision and travel energy.

The preferred Option is therefore to continue with option i) with the focus on existing settlements, and aligning with the settlement hierarchy confirmed by the Moray Economic Strategy and Elgin City for the Future studies. This is regarded as a sustainable model; supporting growth in key centres and reducing the need to travel to work; school or shops and services.

However, experience is showing that Elgin and Forres are growing at a faster rate than other settlements. Some towns and villages may have reached or are nearing their ultimate size and should not accommodate any further development. There may be a need to take a different, more holistic approach to allocations in Speyside? Some rural communities have expanded to a stage where they have virtually become a settlement.

All of this suggests that this current hierarchy may have to be adjusted in future Development Plans, and an alternative Spatial Strategy applied.



KEY



Primary Centres
1st Tier



Secondary Centres
2nd Tier



3rd Tier Settlements



Rural Communities



Tourism Gateways



Major Business
Locations



Offshore Wind
Service Centre

Trunk Roads

'A' Roads

Railway

What Are Main Issues ?

In considering what are the MAIN issues facing Moray, a distinction has to be made between strategic, top level issues and more LOCAL issues that might apply in settlements or smaller geographic areas.

This Main Issues Report does not intend to present re-drafts of all current planning policies, and in-depth reviews of all land designations in towns and villages. This will all be covered at the next stage of the process when the PROPOSED PLAN is produced, and the Council's actual proposals are put forward, for formal objections to be submitted.

A more detailed account of how existing policies of the 2008 Plan have worked, and of land take up and development rates in towns and villages, is contained in the separate Monitoring Report, which accompanies this MIR.

At this stage of the Local Development Plan Process, it is intended to concentrate on only key issues under topic headings of

- Economy
- Housing
- Environment
- Infrastructure
- Settlements: the options that exist for additional sites that might have potential for development. (Settlements for which there are no new housing land requirements, do not feature as an "issue".)

How to Respond

Moray Council is seeking views on and responses to the Main Issues Report.

Some of the cornerstone matters have already been subject to consultation, and decisions taken eg Economic Strategy; Elgin City for the Future. Their findings are not up for debate. Similarly the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment has been signed off as “robust and credible” and thus the Housing Need figure is established. The principles behind decisions taken on certain Council responsibilities eg flood schemes; Elgin south west link road are not re-presented for discussion.

What the Council **would** invite is contributions on aspects such as

- Have all the issues been identified – are there others that require to be considered?
- Do you agree with the spatial distribution of new growth/development – are there alternative ways of promoting growth and providing opportunities in Speyside?
- how should the identified issues be taken forward - what should the Planning response be in terms of both land use designation and Planning policies?
- Are the best sites for development being identified in the settlements?
- What changes need to be made to the 2008 Local Plan?
- What else needs to be planned for to achieve the vision?

Responses can be made in writing; by e mail; using an on line response form (from Council web site). www.moray.gov.uk or contact

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email: localdevelopmentplan@moray.gov.uk

It is the intention, in the interests of openness and transparency, to make all comments received available for viewing on the Council's web site. Personal details such as signature, e mail address, telephone number, will be removed before doing so, but complete confidentiality is not guaranteed.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Development Plan policies on Economic Development are made in order to

- Identify locations where business/employment related development can take place, and facilitate job creation
- Separate uses and activities that may not be compatible
- Provide sustainable economic infrastructure
- Accommodate and provide for new trends/technologies, and respond to identified/forecast growth areas

The 2008 Plan contains policies and proposals that responded to the economic climate at the time. Since then, previously held concerns became realities when the UK Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review raised doubts about the future of both RAF stations in Moray. This resulted in the formulation of the Moray Economic Strategy which seeks to reduce the dependency upon Defence related and other public sector employment.

As it transpired, RAF Lossiemouth is to be retained, but RAF Kinloss has closed, although the Army has re-deployed a regiment (39 Engineer Regiment) to be based at Kinloss.

What is clear is that Moray has to be pro-active if it wishes to promote development and employment.

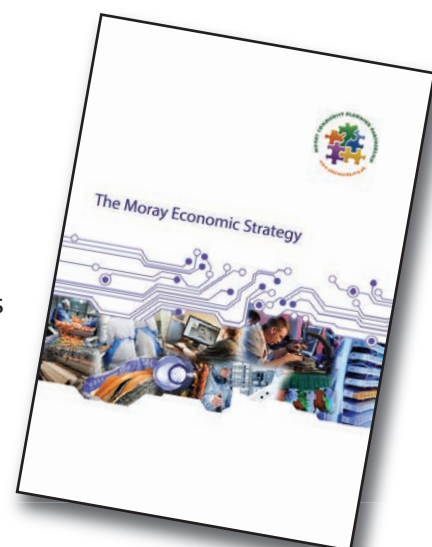
The Moray Economic Strategy

Key elements of the Strategy are:

Diversification

The key thrusts of the Strategy are aimed at:

- Moray being a vibrant 21st century region, with a broad business base providing stable, well paid employment.
- Creating 5,000 jobs in the wider economy, with a focus upon high quality jobs in engineering; and science and technology, along with an increase in the long established sectors such as tourism and food and drink manufacture.
- Improving average earnings to, or above, regional and Scottish averages.



Spatial Roles

Potential for economic growth is identified across Moray, with roles to be played geographically across the area:

- Elgin:**
- Primary Centre role/City for the Future proposals
 - Promotion of Barmuckity Business Park
 - Elgin West Research and Innovation Park
 - Central Area Office Provision
 - 25 ha of Additional Employment Land
 - Life Science Centre/Moray College Campus Redevelopment
 - Research/Health/Education
 - Arts and Sports
- Lossiemouth:** Develop/expand the role of tourism
- Buckie:**
- Quayside facilities to support Offshore Renewables
 - East Moray Science and Business Campus
 - Central Area Office Provision
 - Additional Employment Land at Harbour and March Road
- Forres:**
- Central Area Office Provision
 - Additional 10ha of Employment Land
 - (since publication of the strategy, part of Forres Enterprise Park has been designated as an Enterprise Area to support Life Sciences)
- Keith:**
- Gateway Role in Tourism; language and musical heritage
 - Improved Coach Drop Off Facilities
- Speyside:**
- Tourism/Visitor Facilities
 - Visitor Accommodation/Quality Hotel
 - Town Heritage Trails

Targeted Sectors

Key Sectors to concentrate on are as follows:

Tourism: Attract/Retain Visitors; Events/Promotion/Facilities/Accommodation

Renewables: Capitalise on Offshore Wind Energy/Become base for Operation and Maintenance Support

Life Sciences/Health/Education: Develop cluster of expertise in science and technology, based around Moray College and Dr Gray's Hospital. Build on the award of Enterprise Area status at Forres Enterprise Park.

Arts/Sports: Increase the attractiveness of Moray's cultural offer with expanded Arts School at Moray College, and regional standard sports facilities

Retail/Leisure/Civic: Improve the attractiveness and vitality of core areas; townscape and heritage improvements; central area redevelopment

Infrastructure: Improvements that would bring improvements to businesses – transport; broadband

So How Can the Local Development Plan Support These Objectives?

Land Allocations: Land allocations will be designated in order to provide the sites that will allow these proposals to proceed. Sites that have been considered for this purpose (both those preferred and those not preferred) are shown on the settlement maps.

Policy Formulation: Many of the initiatives do not need specific land use site provision to be made, but need more in the way of a supportive/pro-active policy stance.

Current policies for Economic Development are considered to be satisfactory in this respect, providing a positive framework for considering development proposals. Therefore no significant overhaul of policy is proposed, and any minor amendments to existing wording can be reflected at Proposed Plan stage.

Questions

- Are there further opportunities to develop the Moray Economy that are not covered by the Economic Strategy?
- If so, what is required to make this happen?
- Can the spatial/geographic roles be expanded?

HOUSING

Introduction

The role of the local development plan in providing a policy context for housing.

Local Development Plans contain residential development policies and housing land allocations for several reasons:

- To ensure that there is sufficient land identified to meet needs and demand, and provide an effective supply of sites
- To support the growth strategy and settlement hierarchy
- To ensure an attractive living environment for residents
- To accommodate low impact housing within the countryside
- To assist in the provision of affordable or special needs housing
- To promote the use of renewable energy in new development, which along with energy efficiency measures, will contribute to lowering carbon emissions, and reduce fuel poverty.

Housing Needs and Demand Assessment

The new housing land target; effective supply; nett figure.

The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment identifies a requirement for 6,456 houses to 2023, to provide for the number of households that will require housing. When the supply of existing, undeveloped designated land is subtracted, this leaves a balance of land for 1952 new houses to be allocated. (A full explanation of this process is contained in the supporting background document "Housing Land Requirement")

This level of supply far exceeds the current rate of development/land take up currently being experienced, and is regarded as providing a generous allocation of land for housing. Development should therefore not be constrained by a shortage of designated sites being available.

Distribution by Local Housing Market Area and Settlement

Hierarchy and flexibility allowances; Settlement Allocations;

It is proposed to distribute this housing need around Local Housing Market Areas as identified by HNDA on a population proportion basis, and notwithstanding the healthy supply referred to above, to give additional “flexibility” allowances to Elgin and Speyside (Elgin in recognition of its role as Moray’s principal centre, and Speyside given the need to promote and encourage more housing development, particularly affordable housing). This takes the total figure to 2,490.

1. Hierarchy

The Spatial Strategy preferred for accommodating new development has 4 tiers.

- Primary Centre : Elgin
- Secondary Centres : Forres; Buckie; Keith; Lossiemouth
- Third Tier : smaller towns and villages
- Fourth Tier : Rural Communities

2. Settlement Allocations

Within Local Housing Market Areas, housing allocations have been made to settlements on the basis of their position in the hierarchy and a capacity analysis which examines the ability to accommodate new development. (see separate document). This has resulted in the following proposed distribution of new housing land to settlements.

Affordable Housing

A high proportion (78%) of the housing need to 2023 is for affordable housing, for households unable to afford to buy or rent a house on the open market.

Currently, Planning Policy is that proposals for private housing developments of 10 or more, should provide an affordable housing contribution of 25%.

In order to make a meaningful impact on the affordable need, this % may have to be increased, or made to apply to ALL developments. With the current downturn in the economy, and the affect on the construction industry, fewer affordable houses are being obtained in this way, thereby only adding to the shortfall problem.

Other Housing Issues

- **Travelling Persons:** to comply with Scottish Planning Policy, current Local Plan policies on residential caravans and travelling persons sites will have to be amended/revised to advise on where such sites could be located.
- **Housing in the Countryside:** Current policy is quite flexible and permissive, and presumes in favour of low impact housing. Concern has been expressed about build up in some parts of Moray, and of the designs of houses receiving consent. Some revisions to wording may be required to remove any ambiguity, ensure consistent understanding and intent.
- **Layout and Design:** New housing developments should create pleasant, attractive environments in which to live. A strong emphasis will be placed on achieving this through early engagement with developers. Supplementary Guidance on Urban Design, and implementation of the Scottish Government's Designing Streets advice will be a key feature in achieving this.
- **Climate Change:** New development will need to respond to climate change and support the transition towards reduced carbon emissions. Energy efficiency through positioning of buildings; construction techniques; the use of renewable energy, will all contribute in this respect, and are aspects that developers will require to address.

Questions

- Do you agree with the conclusions in the Capacity Analysis regarding the ability/desirability of settlements to take more housing?
- HNDA requirement exceeds actual recorded development rates, but Scottish Planning Policy promotes a generous supply of land to be made. Do you agree with this "over-provision" as a means of ensuring land availability is not a constraint on development?
- Is the level of development taking place in the countryside affecting the character of rural areas?
- Are there other means for distributing and providing more development in the Speyside Area?

Local Housing Market Area (total requirement)	Settlement	New Housing Allocation
Buckie (320)	Buckie	245
	Cullen	55
	Findochty	0
	Portgordon	20
	Portknockie	0
Elgin (1420)	Burghead	20
	Cunninghamston	0
	Duffus	0
	Elgin	1150
	Fochabers	60
	Garmouth/Kingston	0
	Hopeman	25
	Lhanbryde	0
	Lossiemouth	100
	Mosstodloch	60
	Urquhart	10
Forres (350)	Alves	0
	Dallas	0
	Dyke	0
	Findhorn	5
	Forres	345
	Kinloss	0
	Rafford	0
Keith (170)	Keith	160
	Newmill	0
	Rothiemay	10
Speyside (230)	Aberlour	75
	Archiestown	20
	Craigellachie	20
	Dufftown	75
	Rothies	40
TOTAL 2490		2490

The sites considered and preferred for providing this land supply are shown on the Settlement Maps. In some instances, the preference for the direction of longer term expansion (post 2023) has indicatively been shown. This will allow consideration of potential servicing requirements at the outset.

ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

The environmental policies within the current Local Plan seek to protect and safeguard the natural and built environment from inappropriate development. This includes

- Natural and built heritage sites
- Landscapes and scenic areas
- Waste management
- Renewable energy
- Developments in rural, countryside areas.

The existing policies are generally working well, and require little in the way of alteration or overhaul. Moray's high quality environment is recognised as a prime asset and protecting our landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage and water resources remains a priority. Many of these policies reflect the position of statutory bodies such as Scottish Natural Heritage, and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

Climate Change

The introduction of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 will further influence how the Council considers and plans for new development. Moray has an important role to play in contributing to the Scottish Government's ambitious

targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. It is also recognised that communities in Moray need to be resilient to the potential impacts associated with climate change.

Resource Efficiency

In identifying new land for development, the Plan will, where possible, promote brownfield sites for development and where appropriate, consider increasing densities to use land more efficiently. In accordance with the

Settlement Hierarchy, proposals for significant housing and employment land releases will be focused in the larger towns, in close proximity to existing populations and service providers. This will help reduce the need to travel and increase opportunities to utilise public transport, or walking/cycling to work or school.



To address the heat and energy requirements of new developments, policies will be developed that seek a reduction in CO2 emissions in larger developments, including identifying opportunities for decentralised energy generation. All new developments should ensure that energy efficiency measures and low and zero carbon technologies are incorporated into the design process to reduce carbon emissions. By embedding sustainable design principles including siting and orientation to utilise solar energy, increasing energy efficiency and specifying locally sourced materials where possible, emissions can be greatly reduced.

Renewable Energy

The Scottish Government is seeking to achieve 100% of electricity generation from renewable sources by 2020. Currently Moray is experiencing a large volume of wind energy planning applications ranging from small individual turbines to larger wind farms. In order to guide wind energy developments to the most appropriate locations, revised supplementary planning guidance has been prepared addressing landscape capacity issues and cumulative impact. The spatial framework from the wind energy supplementary guidance will be incorporated into the Proposed Plan.

Moray offers the potential for other types of renewable energy proposals and is keen to promote community scale projects across all technologies.



Creating Sustainable Places

It is a priority of Moray Council that local people live in an attractive natural and built environment that is sustainable and enhanced for future generations. In order to achieve this it is proposed to promote key design principles and the implementation of the Scottish Government's publications on Designing Places and Designing Streets. New development should encourage cycling and walking by improving non vehicular links and reducing car dominant road layouts. The identification and provision of quality open spaces, landscaping and green wedges and corridors can perform a number of functions for amenity, sport, food growth, flood alleviation and wildlife habitats. To facilitate provision of these spaces in our towns and villages developers could be asked to provide a minimum 15% of open space in new developments. The green infrastructure provided should be designed to connect with surrounding green spaces.



Flood Risk

Parts of Moray remain susceptible to flooding and new development should avoid floodplains. To ensure flood risk elsewhere is not exacerbated, developments should reduce surface runoff through use of sustainable drainage systems. Flood protection schemes in Lhanbryde; Forres and Rothes have been completed, Work on the Elgin and River Findhorn schemes have commenced.

In order to support the above aims it is proposed to prepare Sustainable Development supplementary planning guidance, which will be issued for consultation at Proposed Plan stage.

Q

Questions

- Do current planning policies adequately protect Moray's environmental assets?
- What improvements would you like to see in your day to day living environment/surroundings?
- Are further measures required to respond to the impact of Climate Change?
- Do you agree with the suggestion that new developments should provide a minimum amount (15%?) site area as Open Space?



INFRASTRUCTURE

Introduction

Development Plans have infrastructure policies for a number of reasons:

- To integrate planning, land use and transportation;
- To ensure satisfactory road access arrangements and parking provisions for new developments;
- To protect and safeguard key aspects of infrastructure – railway stations; freight facilities; bus stations; harbours; cycle routes; long distance footpaths; road improvement lines;
- To promote sustainable travel, by providing for public transport; cycling; walking; traffic management;
- To support key agencies such as Scottish Water; Transport Scotland;
- To take the needs of energy providers and communications companies into account.

Main Issues

A96 Trunk Road: The Scottish Government has announced that it intends to dual the A96 from Aberdeen to Inverness by 2030. The 2008 Plan already includes safeguarded corridors for by passes for Elgin and Keith, but these had never been endorsed by Transport Scotland, and do not feature in the Strategic Transport Policy Review, the transport improvement programme to 2025. This change of position may mean a major review of developments along the whole length of the A96 through Moray, in particular whether the current bypass corridors for these settlements are retained. The Scottish Government has already indicated that there is no requirement to safeguard potential routes around Elgin.



A95 Trunk Road: This is an important artery linking Moray to the A9, carrying significant amounts of HGV traffic from Moray's industries. The Scottish Government proposes to dual the A9 by 2025, and it will be important to ensure that in-tandem improvements to the A95 are brought forward, so that Moray's connection with an improved artery south is not overlooked.

Elgin Traffic Circulation: Improved traffic circulation in and around Elgin is required to improve traffic flow and avoid congestion, and allow new development to take place. The necessary road and junction improvements are already identified in the current Local Plan, and money from developers is accruing to allow these improvements to proceed. A number of upgrades have been provided in New Elgin as part of the Elgin South Masterplan. The Council has confirmed its intention to proceed with a south west link road connecting Edgar Road to the A96 via Wittet Drive. As part of the release of new sites for development, further improvements will be identified, to which these developments should contribute. This will be discussed in more detail in the proposed plan once the extent and location of new land releases have been finalised.

Active Travel: The Council has adopted a number of Active Travel Plans which promote non vehicular traffic around settlements. Developers will be expected to implement aspects of these Plans to provide the required facilities and connect into existing networks, and allow increased opportunities for walking and cycling.

Renewable Energy: The national electricity network requires to be upgraded across the country, in order to accommodate the new energy being produced from renewable sources. Part of this network runs through Moray, with the Keith to Beaulieu link mentioned in the National Planning Framework, as one section to be upgraded. New undersea cables connecting Shetland to the mainland are to come ashore in Moray, west of Portgordon, and then to a new converter station near Keith. Proposals for offshore wind turbines in the Moray Firth will see the energy generated also come ashore at Portgordon and follow the same corridor to a second converter station at Keith. Thus Keith will become an important hub in the network. The infrastructural requirements for these nationally important network upgrades will have to be recognised in the new Plan.

Offshore Renewables: With approx 400 wind turbines proposed in the Moray Firth, there is potential for Moray to capitalise on this offshore investment. It is unlikely that any of the constructional elements will take place in Moray, but Buckie, and its harbour, are well placed to become the location for an Operation and Maintenance base, to service this massive wind farm. The harbour has already been used as a base for servicing the experimental turbines that are currently operating in the Firth. The Council is co-operating with companies who have expressed an interest in making Buckie their base, and once appropriate criteria have been confirmed, this will be reflected in site allocation and policy areas in the Proposed Plan.

Water and Drainage: Scottish Water has no significant investment plans for Moray that require land allocations to be made. There are generally no difficulties with water supply to communities in Moray, but in some locations there is only limited capacity at waste water treatment works. In some instances, this is below the level of housing being allocated to settlements, but it is Scottish Water's position that they will work with developers once a planning application is submitted and approved, rather than speculatively invest to meet "potential" growth before this is more certain. Flooding from sewerage systems occurs in some locations and network upgrades will be required. In some smaller settlements there is no capacity at present, and this is restricting the amount of development taking place. This is constraining development in many smaller communities.

Rail Services: Improvements to the Inverness to Aberdeen railway line are proposed, to improve journey times and frequency of service. There are provisional proposals to re-organise stations/platform areas at Forres and Keith, which may require land to be identified/safeguarded. In order that any potential for increased movement of freight by rail can be realised, all existing facilities should be retained for that purpose.



Electronic/digital technology: The Council would wish Moray to be well served by modern, fast communication systems that will contribute to economic development and ensure Moray is not disadvantaged in comparison to other areas. The need for mobile phone masts has receded, and more recent technologies rely on satellite and broadband connections. Neither of these require much in the way of land allocations to be provided, but the needs of modern technologies need to be recognised in order for Moray to remain economically competitive and be able to attract new employment sectors.

Other Issues: The extent to which new developments impact upon community infrastructure (schools; sports facilities; libraries etc) is addressed through Developer Contributions process, where developers make financial contributions towards mitigation of impact. The Council will consider preparing supplementary guidance to explain how it intends to operate this process in Moray.

Questions

- Have the land use requirements for infrastructure been adequately covered?

SETTLEMENTS

Introduction

The areas of land being considered for designation are shown in the following settlement maps.

This land falls into 3 categories

- Existing sites already designated in the current Plan, which will be carried forward into the new Plan
- new sites considered for development that are **preferred** for release
- new sites considered for development which are **not preferred** for release

The rationale and reasoning for preferred/not preferred sites is expanded upon in the separate Bid Site Checklist document.

Listing by Local Housing Market Area

Settlement maps are grouped by Local Housing Market Areas, as opposed to being listed alphabetically as has been the case in previous Local Plans. This is in order to align with the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment, which identified these more localised geographic areas as cohesive housing units.

The housing need in each LHMA has been distributed to settlements, the methodology for which is discussed in a separate document, and includes an analysis of the “capacity” for a settlement to accommodate development, and takes account of status within the Settlement Hierarchy.

LHMA	Settlements within LHMA
Elgin	Elgin, Burghead, Duffus, Fochabers, Garmouth/Kingston, Hopeman, Lhanbryde, Lossiemouth, Mosstodloch, Cummingston, Urquhart
Buckie	Buckie, Cullen, Findochty, Portgordon, Portknockie
Forres	Forres, Alves, Dallas, Dyke, Findhorn, Kinloss, Rafford
Keith	Keith, Newmill, Rothiemay
Speyside	Aberlour, Archiestown, Craigellachie, Dufftown, Rothes

Map Content

These settlement maps do not include all the information/designations shown on current settlement plans in the 2008 Plan, and concentrate only on the main development sites to be carried forward, along with new sites under consideration.

Full versions of proposed new settlement plans will be put forward in the Proposed Plan, once these options and alternatives have been fully debated through consultation.

Settlements not Included

Settlements that are proposed to receive no new housing allocations are not included at this stage. This is in response to the Capacity Analysis (see Housing Land Requirement background paper) and applies to the following

Alves
Cunningham
Dallas
Dyke
Duffus
Findochty
Garmouth
Kingston
Kinloss
Lhanbryde
Newmill
Portknockie
Rafford

These settlements are likely to reflect the status quo, or show very minor changes, in the Proposed Plan. Any “bid sites” that were submitted for consideration are shown in the Bid Site Checklist document.

Questions

- Do you agree with the issues identified in each settlement (shown on the settlement map)?
- Are the preferred sites the best options for meeting future land requirements?
- Have you any comments on “planning matters” in your community?

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Background

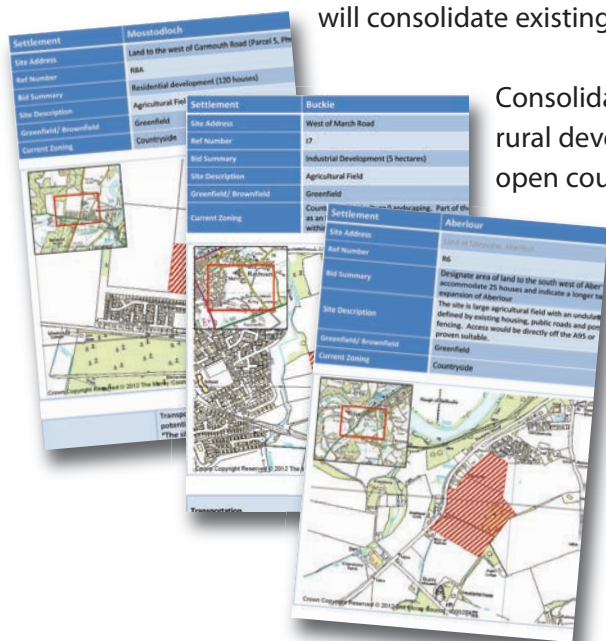
Rural communities are the 4th tier of the Settlement Hierarchy and are an important element of the Council's policies towards Housing in the Countryside, as location where development will largely be encouraged.

Their original identification dates to the 1993-98 Local Plan, and was based on small rural settlements which served as a focal point within the surrounding area. They comprised a recognisable built up area; a focal point; main street or central area, with perhaps a community facility such as school, village hall or shop/post office. There may have been an employment connection such as a distillery or sawmill, or historical links to traditional roles in agriculture, fishing, estate management.

In subsequent Local Plans, the "community facilities" aspect has been reduced, and further rural communities have been designated only on their status as a cohesive, physical grouping of buildings.

New Requests

The 2008 Plan now contains 78 rural communities, and bids for several new ones to be designated have been received, along with requests to extend boundaries/allocate new sites in existing rural communities. The full extent of these bids is contained in the separate "Bid Checklist" document. The respective merits of these bids are not discussed here and it is not intended to present site options and alternatives. What should be considered is the basic principle of how best to promote rural communities as a preferred location for development, that will consolidate existing groupings and servicing costs.



Consolidation of these groupings as a location for rural development is preferred to development in open countryside. Whilst there has been

development interest in approx 50% of the rural communities, there continues to be a strong demand for houses in the open countryside. There are many small groupings that do not have rural community status, and in some locations the numbers of individual houses being approved are creating a build up in what was previously more open countryside.

Options

So, are there opportunities for the role of rural communities to be re-examined? Some options might be

- To continue with the current format, and have rural communities with identified development sites
- To have a boundary only around communities, with a presumption in favour of proposals within this line (subject to other technical criteria)
- To have no boundaries, but permit development which abuts/joins the boundary of an existing property, subject to a limit of say no more than a 25% increase in houses over the plan period.

Outcome

Following consideration of comments and feedback, proposals for Rural Communities will be contained within the Proposed Plan for more detailed consideration.