

## **Moray Economic Strategy (MES) Quarterly Update from Programme Groups January to March 2016**

### **Board and Media**

At its meeting 25 February the Moray Economic Partnership board:

- agreed that SCDI become a partner member
- received a presentation from Skills Development Scotland setting out the [2016 Regional Skills Assessment](#)
- was advised that in November 2015 targets were revised in the 10 year plan (Moray 2026). The Plan will be printed in June
- was advised that a new Employability Partnership is being established and will devise a set of related performance indicators
- was advised that the Scottish Futures Trust is encouraging all public sector agencies to facilitate the provision of public Wi-Fi from public buildings. The [Public Wireless Programme](#)
- received a status update on projects from the Transportation Programme; and
- received a status update regarding the Moray Council Budget projected shortfall. TMC need to make £14.3 million of savings in 2017/18 which will impact services.

Media coverage during this period included items:

- Flood defence success story in Scotsman
- Creativity story in Scotsman this week
- Castle2Cathedral2Cashmere Victorian Christmas
- Castle2Cathedral2Cashmere January events
- Monthly columns on successful events and Year of Architecture and Design

Campaigns and media initiatives included:

- Creative sector story for Scotsman
- Castle2Cathedral2Cashmere events news released (5 in total)
- C2C2C writing competition news release
- World Host PR support
- A95 strategy news release
- Christmas advert social media campaign
- Apprenticeships Week – case studies for print media and film
- School Videos

A short feature appeared on p45 of the winter edition of [Business Scotland magazine](#) with an expanded feature scheduled to be published in the Spring. Contractors have been working with 3 high schools on the “Its Moray” campaign which will be launched June 13, 2016.

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## **Tourism and Culture**

### **1. Moray Speyside Tourism update**

- Cameron Taylor left Moray Speyside Tourism on 29<sup>th</sup> April to return to his roots in Orkney. He brought experience and knowledge of the tourism industry at the right time to establish Moray Speyside as a tourism destination, and will be greatly missed. Moray Chamber of Commerce is recruiting a new tourism manager, initially on a twelve month contract.
- Cameron's enthusiasm for the Real Macbeth created international interest at the time of the premiere of the new Macbeth movie, and Moray Speyside Tourism (MST) will continue to promote Moray's Macbeth connection as a cultural asset.
- Visit Scotland Expo in Edinburgh on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April had 6 stands representing Moray led by MST including the Four Towns Partnership and Elgin BID.
- MST has launched print and web versions of the MS Larder Guide, Cycling Guide, Coast Guide and a series of short videos matching these themes.
- Digital Tourism project is now underway, and businesses are being surveyed to establish areas of need and set a baseline for future evaluation of the project.
- MST has written to Visit Scotland expressing disappointment that the new VS website greatly reduces Moray's visibility.
- Visit Scotland has been working with Moray Speyside Tourism on a digital advertising campaign to promote the region this spring (from March until May 2016) – including the region's fantastic cycling, coast, and natural larder.
- A combination of direct emails, a double-page spread in the Sunday Post, and posts on VisitScotland's social media channels will generate over 1.1 million opportunities for potential visitors to see messaging about Moray.

### **2. WorldHost**

Activity is being focussed on Elgin with help from Elgin BID. A temporary post has been established funded by People 1<sup>st</sup> to promote World Host directly to businesses.

### **3. Moray Place Partnership**

The Moray Cultural Strategy stakeholders' group is developing a proposal for an application for Place Partnership funding from Creative Scotland. It will be based on the key strategic themes of Health and Wellbeing, Accessible Cultural Experiences for every community, a Dynamic and Authentic cultural offering and Thriving Creative Businesses. This will be an ambitious project requiring evidence of financial and in kind participation from delivery partners. The proposal from Moray has got through Round 1 of the Creative Scotland application process. Further consultation is underway with the aim of submitting the second stage application in July.

**The economic impact of tourism in 2015 Moray measured by STEAM was £105.76M compared to £102M in 2014.**

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### **Skills and Training**

The programme group did not meet during this period due to the changes to the Community Planning Structure with the creation of an Employability Partnership. The group is meeting in May to review what targets it sets and how these relate to the MEP and the new Employability Partnership.

Partners strongly supported [Scottish Apprentice Week](#) Feb to March showcasing existing apprentices with events for students and parents showcasing existing apprentices.

An updated [Regional Skills Assessment](#) was published in January and Skills Development Scotland is consulting with partners on plans to increase the number of apprentices by 2030.

The 4 year project "[Developing the Young Workforce](#) in Moray" has been established lead by the Chamber of Commerce, Steve Bremner has been appointed as project manager. [steve@dywmoray.co.uk](mailto:steve@dywmoray.co.uk)

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### **Development and Inward Investment Group**

- **Central Elgin Action Plan – 2015/16**

Monthly meetings have been held with Lead Officers with project plans updated. A car parking strategy for Elgin has been agreed and work is shortly to be commissioned. The results of which will be reported back to committee later on in the year. An application to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund is anticipated to be made once the call for applications is opened (deadline anticipated to be end of June). The application will cover a range of town centre improvements for Elgin and will cover the bus station and town centre wifi. A pop-up shop scheme for Elgin is also being progressed.

- **Buckie Harbour**

Buckie has been asked to provide a contingency support facility for the BOWL development. Council Officers are currently in negotiation with SSE on this. Moray Council staff are progressing plans to make the most of the opportunities presented by the BOWL development. Staff are currently waiting to hear from SSE that the Financial Investment Decision has been made (this has been imminent for a number of months).

- **Development of Industrial Land at March Road, Buckie**

Preliminary discussions between Estates and Development Management have taken place and it is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted later this year. Further preliminary meetings will be held.

- **Barmuckity Business Park**

Springfield have intimated that they would still like to progress this project and are seeking a meeting, however there are still a number of issues around cost that need to be resolved.

- **Elgin South Masterplan/Moray Sports Centre**

The Elgin South Masterplan is currently out for consultation following agreement by Planning & Regulatory Services Committee in April. It is anticipated that a detailed planning application will be submitted in the summer which will include housing, a sports centre and primary school.

- **Elgin Retail Park**

Planning permission was granted for the change of use of a vacant unit at the retail park to a Fitness Gym which will be open 24hrs a day, seven days a week and will employ 8 full-time staff along with providing part-time work opportunities.

- **Pluscarden Abbey**

Planning permission has been granted for alterations and extensions to form additional bedroom accommodation along with a new hall/library.

- **Forres Enterprise Park**

HIE is currently tendering for the fit out of Unit 10 as there is a company interested in taking a lease on the building. It is hoped that this result in the unit being let in the next quarter.

There are a number of parties interested in purchasing land from HIE on EPF, discussions are progressing towards Heads of Terms.

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## **Transportation**

Transport Scotland (TS) will be awarding the contract for stage 2 (detail options for route development of the dualling of the A96) in June /July 2016. Thereafter the Council will expect to engage with TS and their consultants on the routes through Moray.

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