

Moray Economic Strategy (MES) Quarterly Update from Programme Groups March to June 2016

Board and Media

At its meeting 15 May the Moray Economic Partnership board:

- Received a presentation from Jenny Holdsworth and Willie Wood, Johnstons of Elgin (meeting host) about its work with recruiting young people into employment and the [Moray Developing the Young Workforce Initiative](#).
- Received a presentation outlining a [comprehensive economic data](#) set that has been prepared for use by the partnership by the UHI Economic Research Unit
- Received the [Moray Speyside Tourism annual activity report for 2015/16](#) and
- Received a multitude of partner updates. (see meeting minute)

Media coverage during this period included items:

- Creativity story in Scotsman
- Business Scotland Moray focus
- Elgin Sculpture
- Apprenticeships
- Tourism summit

Campaigns and media initiatives included:

- Castle2Cathedral2Cashmere news release (4 in total)
- World Host continuing
- A95 strategy draft
- Apprenticeships Week videos and social media
- Schools videos (see below)
- Support to Moray Business Week
- [Business Scotland article](#) (June/Jul)

Contractors Northport Studios working with 3 high schools on the “This is Moray” campaign launched 3 short films June 13, 2016. These and Scottish Apprentice Week videos can be seen on the [MEP Facebook Page](#)

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For more information see [MEP meeting agendas and minutes](#)

Tourism and Culture

1. Moray Speyside Tourism update

Laurie Piper has joined MST as Tourism Operations Manager. He brings a strong marketing background with him, having worked for Eden Court Theatre, Highlife Highland and Cultural Fife.

A meeting has been held with Jo Robinson, the new Regional Director for Visit Scotland with responsibility for Aberdeen City and Shire and Moray. She has pledged support for development of Moray’s tourism. She will be invited to attend the Tourism and Culture Group meetings.

The success of the third Seafest event in Lossiemouth was very successful and praised in the Scottish Parliament:

Lossiemouth's Seafest, which ended on Saturday with the landmark Food and Drink Fayre, is the subject of a motion by Moray MSP Richard Lochhead, who was clearly impressed when he visited the event.

Record crowds of well over 4000 attended the final day of the festival and enjoyed a host of entertainers, fine food and drink and a number of activities suitable for all the family.

Mr Lochhead's motion asks "that the Parliament recognises the success of the third Seafest in Lossiemouth, which is a week-long series of events in the town; commends Donna Milne, the chair of Seafest, and her team of volunteers for the great organisation of a packed programmed of events, culminating in a food and drink fayre showcasing the best of Moray produce".

2. WorldHost

Activity is being focussed on Elgin with help from Elgin BID. A temporary post has been established funded by People 1st to promote World Host directly to businesses. Elgin has now achieved the accolade of WorldHost Destination thanks to the commitment of its business to training and customer service.

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. The second stage application in will be submitted in July.

4. Findhorn Bay Arts Festival

The Findhorn Bay Festival is a six-day celebration of Scottish arts and culture, taking place at the heart of Moray from 21-26 September 2016, showcasing artists of national and international renown.

Staged as part of Scotland's Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design 2016, there will be a vibrant and dynamic programme of events spotlighting Moray's important contribution to Scotland's architectural heritage. With a particular focus upon green innovation, there will be many events showcasing the groundbreaking conservation and environmental projects taking place in Moray.

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Skills Investment

The former MES Skills & Training programme group has been replaced by the Skills Investment Group that reports to the new Employability Partnership and is reported here for information because of its bearing on economic development.

The group has revised its action plan in line with the proposed actions of the new Employability Moray group and sub groups. These actions will be presented to the Employability Moray Group meeting in August for approval/ revision.

Events:

Work continues in the development of the **3rd Moray Business Week** with a strong and varied selection of activities and events. This year's programme includes less but more focused events than 2015. Moray Business Week takes place from the 14th – 18th November. Look out for information on the Moray Business Week website from September 2016.

Moray Jobs and You – the 2nd Moray Jobs and You Careers event takes place in the Alexander Graham Bell Centre for Digital Health on the 15th September between 4pm and 8pm. This event focuses on companies who are looking to recruit staff and organisation who offer additional support for individuals moving into employment. Organisations attending so far includes: TSI Moray, Blue Arrow, Johnston and Carmichael, Army and Navy.

Alexander Graham Bell Research, Innovation and Technology Seminar Series – Moray College UHI have developed a 6 month seminar series which includes some of the most experienced and distinguished professionals working in the field of life science and digital health as part of a new and exciting seminar series. Kicking off the seminar series on the 30th August is Professor Nikola Kasabov, Knowledge Engineering and Discovery Research Institute (KEDRI), Auckland University of Technology, who will talk about his work in the field of deep learning, spiking neural networks and spatio-temporal data machines including the NeuCube. The series is free to attend and the first seminar takes place on the 30th August from 5pm. **More information and to book your place go to:**

<https://www.moray.uhi.ac.uk/business-and-community/agbc/research-innovation-and-technology-seminar-series>

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Development and Inward Investment Group

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

Monthly meetings continue to be held with Lead Officers with project plans updated. Reports have been presented to committee on Drop off points for coaches which have been agreed. A trial for re-introduction vehicular movements into the High

Street/Plainstones has not been recommended to be pursued further. An annual summary report will be presented to the Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee in September. An application to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund has been submitted and an announcement as to whether this has been successful is anticipated to be made in August. Applications have been submitted to refurbish six domestic dwellings re-introducing further living accommodation in central Elgin as well as a proposal to provide 15 serviced apartments and retail units in the High Street.

- **Buckie Harbour**

Final Investment decision has been made on the BOWL project and 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.

- **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 for the first phase of development. 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 early August and will include housing, a sports centre and primary school.

- **Housing Development**

Major Planning applications have been submitted for residential development in Forres, Elgin and Buckie.

- **Coleburn Distillery**

A planning application have been submitted for the change of use of store/workshop building including an extension to form a café and retail area on a site which has been derelict for a number of years.

- **Commercial Development in Elgin**

Proposal of Application Notices have been submitted for sites at Linkwood Place

East for commercial development of classes 2-7 and 11 and on the Elgin Auction Mart site for mixed use development comprising public house/restaurant care home and housing which is a positive sign of potential future investment being brought to Elgin.

- **Forres Enterprise Park**

Update as of April 2016

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

- **A96**

Transport Scotland (TS) has awarded 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 by the end of August 2016.

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