

# **Moray Economic Strategy (MES) Quarterly Update from Programme Groups January – March 2017**

## **Board and Media**

The Moray Economic Partnership board held its quarterly meeting on 23 February at HIE, Forres. The board:

- Received an update regarding the Regional Growth Deal Bid
- Received the Draft Employability Strategy
- Discussed the Community Planning Partnership Public Outreach held in 2016
- Considered the implications of the forthcoming Apprentice Levy
- Received a programme update from the Transportation Programme & from the Employability Partnership; and
- Received partner updates. (see meeting minute for details)

### **Media Activities 8 December 2016 to 22 February 2017**

#### **Campaigns and initiatives**

- Apprenticeship Week (6-10 March)
- Castle2Cathedral2Cashmere support
- WorldHost ongoing support
- Support for Moray Business Week (ongoing for 2017)
- Have a Moray Christmas advert social media

#### **Future stories**

- Family firms story for Scotsman and wider circulation
- Friends of the Scotsman article on Lossiemouth and Kinloss investment
- Scottish Apprenticeship Week (Videos and Press releases).
- Kinloss Barracks Employment and Leisure Fayre (May) joint initiative – (promote the close relationship with Military in Moray and skills military bring).
- WorldHost (Station Hotel destination status, Fochabers and Forres to announce destination status)
- Northern Scot column (Feb: Year of Heritage, Archaeology and Culture).

#### **8 December 2016 to 22 February 2017 Coverage**

- Northern Scot columns –Dec: Christmas events Jan: Rail Improvements
- Moray history – Macbeth and Buke of the Howlat
- Executive magazine – January – Ones to Watch
- DYW/WorldHost course at Johnstons
- Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere (Elgin Heritage Experience) stories, Sculptures

Publications & 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

- **DIGITAL TOURISM SCOTLAND** – we are now into the second season of delivery of our DTS initiative. Since the launch of the workshops in October 2016, we have welcomed 117 individuals from local tourism businesses, all keen to improve their digital skills. The current semester's workshops have been developed based on user feedback and specific requests from workshop participants and have included workshops on specifying and purchasing a new website, Mobile SEO and video content. Next semester's workshop programme is reduced to reflect that our tourism businesses will open for the season around Easter and have limited capacity to attend events during their busy spell.
- **MORAY SPEYSIDE GOLF DEVELOPMENT** We have recently brought together all of Moray's golf courses to begin a programme of collective/collaborative marketing which will help to promote the region's diverse golf offer online, socially and in press/PR activity – it is also anticipated that the golf dev group will be involved in our Growth Fund bid.
- **WORLD HOST** – MST continues to provide support for the destination-wide World Host initiative. Most recently helping to secure 'WH Destination' status for Forres and Fochabers.
- **VISITSCOTLAND EXPO** – The team's main focus of activity at present is preparing for the region's largest ever attendance at EXPO, Scotland's biggest B2B travel trade show. The MST aisle will have 12 stands, including Ballindalloch Castle, Malt Whisky Trail and Station Hotel.
- **VISITSCOTLAND GROWTH FUND** – we have submitted a note of interest to Visit Scotland for Growth Fund, this year's focus will be on the travel trade, rather than consumer marketing and will be targeted to bespoke, small-scale, tour operators. Growth Fund requires matched funding, so MST will be seeking up to £20k to match VisitScotland's investment.
- **MST FUNDING** – Our new 3 year funding agreement from HIE and Moray Council began on 1<sup>st</sup> April. It provides us with some, but not all of the funding we require. A key priority for MST in the next months is to consult on, research and begin to develop a model for sustainability. Laurie is meeting with Moray Council Head of Finance and Chief Accountant on 3<sup>rd</sup> May to begin this process.
- **MEP TOURISM & CULTURE GROUP** – Laurie Piper has been appointed as chair of the Moray Economic Partnership Tourism and Culture Group, following Margery MacLennan's retirement. This appointment reflects the importance of tourism to the Moray economy.
- **MORAY TOURISM STRATEGY**- The current Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray was written in 2014 and is now due a refresh. Following agreement with HIE, the strategy will be revisited to ensure it is still relevant, and will be amended/adapted accordingly.
- **MORAY WINTER FESTIVAL** – MST are supporting the development of a

new Winter Festival for Moray, which is intended to take place between Nov/Jan and which could become a key attraction for out of season visitors to the region.

- **MST CONFERENCE** – The date for this year’s MST Conference will shortly be announced (but for you, it’s 8<sup>th</sup> Nov) – a series of key speakers have already been lined up, including Pete Crane, Visitor Services Manager from Cairngorm National Park, Phil Prentice from Scotland’s Towns Partnership and Andrew Macnair from UK Inbound.
- **MORAY PLACE PARTNERSHIP** – Lead Partner HIE is awaiting the legal offer from Creative Scotland. When that is received recruitment of the part-time post of project coordinator will commence.

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### Skills Investment

The group met twice since Christmas. The action plan has been finalised in line with Employability Moray and will be reviewed every 6 months. It is expected that a revision will be required following the production of the Moray Skills Plan for Moray due to be completed by August 2017.

**Moray Skills Plan** – Moray Council are going through a procurement exercise for the development of an update Moray Skills plan which is due to be completed by August. At that point there may be some revisions to the SIG actions.

**Moray Growth Deal** – A number of sectorial based workshops have been held to look at project ideas for the Moray Growth Deal. Ideas are currently being worked up and it is expected that a bid will be submitted to the SG in 2018. The group will continue to monitor progress on this.

#### Events:

**Scottish Apprenticeship Week** – took place week of the 6<sup>th</sup> March. There was 1 day of events [3], Employer Business Breakfast, Meet the Employer both in the Alexander Graham Bell Centre for Digital Health and a careers event for young people and their parents in the offices of Skills Development Scotland in the evening. During the week partners, employers and apprentices took part in a number of live interviews, which were streamed onto facebook. Feedback from all who took part was very positive.

**Alexander Graham Bell Research, Innovation and Technology Seminar Series** with Moray College UHI continues and has attracted high profile speakers from Universities across the country. The speakers booked for January – March presented their work in relation to digital approaches in health including cardiology and development of apps for long term conditions. This initial pilot series is now completed but a new series will be launched from September 2017.

**Kinloss 39 Regiment** – the 39 Regiment will be holding an education day mainly for spouses and children of the Army personnel. This event is due to take place in May.

### **Employer Engagement:**

**PACE** – The threat to the loss of jobs following Capitas unsuccessful contract renewal for SSE was not realised. KURA who were the successful bidders will retain existing staff and have intimated that they would be looking to increase the staffing levels from 120 – 250. They are currently working with HIE and the DWP to look at how they can successfully attract staff.

**PTS training** – The DWP in partnership with Moray College UHI will be running Personal Track Safety Courses with a view to meeting the projected demand for rail workers for the upgrade to the rail network between Aberdeen and Inverness. Trained up [training provider] have also been awarded 40 places for PTS training through the oil and gas transition fund. Demand is expected to continue beyond 2017.

**Makkar technologies** – the group went on a site visit to Makkar Technologies in Forres. The company are planning to recruit a number of apprentices over the next 12 – 18 months.

### **Schools**

**Career Ready** – Moray College UHI provided internships for 2 career ready pupils over the Summer. The 2 pupils worked with a number of college department during their 4 weeks. The Career Ready programme is growing year on year and with more employers coming on board. For more information and how to get involved contact: Susan.Macpherson@careerready.org.uk

**Apprenticeships** – the group continues to monitor the developments within the apprenticeship programmes including the foundation and graduate level apprenticeship as well as the existing MA programme.

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

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

The application to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund has not progressed through the stage 2 application and a meeting is being arranged to discuss how to take elements of the proposal forward with the relevant parties.

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

A planning application has been submitted for the road development, associated landscaping and SUDS design which will be presented to the next available Planning & Regulation Services Committee.

- **Other Major Planning Proposals (PANS) & Applications**

Proposal of application notices have been submitted for a number of major development proposals which include a Phased Sand & Gravel Extraction at Spey Bay Quarry, Additional Warehouses at Malcomburn Bond, a Borrow Pit to serve Dornell Wind farm and a Photovoltaic solar farm at Speyslaw in Urquhart. These were reported to the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee in February & March 2017.

- **Barmuckity Business Park**

A decision on the funding application is anticipated imminently.

- **Forres Enterprise Park**

Currently only Unit 9 is vacant, with Unit 7 recently being let to Phoenix Instinct Ltd who provide luggage for wheelchair users. HIE are dealing with a number of enquiries for sites and one large potential inward investment.

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

These are both pending consideration and will be reported to the next available Planning & Regulatory Services Committee.

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## **Transportation**

### **A96 Dualling**

Transport Scotland (TS) awarded the contract for stage 2 (detail options for route development of the dualling of the A96) in June /July 2016. TS and consultants intend to carry out a review of the strategic route options and present a number of more detailed route options in the Summer of 2017.

### **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 with a view to lease property to support contingency arrangements.

Council has agreed to the sale of the Buckie shipyard and is currently negotiating with a potential buyer.

The Council is looking to secure Buckie as a base for support vessels to do

preliminary work on decommissioning for oil fields in the Moray Firth.

### **Elgin Transportation Strategy**

The Council has approved a draft [Transportation Strategy for Elgin](#) that will support growth in development over the next 15 years

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