

# **Moray Economic Strategy (MES)**

## **Quarterly Update from Programme Groups**

### **April - June 2017**

#### **Board and Media**

Hosted by Robertson, following a visit to the Macallan construction site, the Moray Economic Partnership (MEP) board held its quarterly meeting on 25 May at the Craigellachie Hotel. The board:

- Received an introduction from [Muckle Media](#) the recently appointed media services provider for MEP
- Received a presentation about Community Planning in Moray - The next Community Plan – Moray [Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#) (LOIP)
- Received an update regarding the timeline and vision for the Regional Growth Deal Bid
- Considered a “ Greater Place” funding expression of interest
- Made observations regarding the Highlands & Islands Regional Talent Attraction & Recruitment Strategy; and
- Received partner updates. (see meeting minute for details)

#### **Public Relation Activities 23 February – 23 May 2017**

##### **Campaigns and Initiatives**

- WorldHost ongoing support
- Support for Moray Business Week (ongoing for 2017)
- Have a Moray Christmas advert social media
- Doors Open Day (23 Sep)

##### **Future Stories**

- Family firms story for Scotsman and wider circulation
- Friends of the Scotsman article on Lossiemouth and Kinloss investment
- Northern Scot Column (New Council, reinforce priorities to grow economy, Moray Employability Strategy & The Moray Skills Pathways on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2017.

##### **23 February 2017 to 23 May Coverage**

- Apprenticeship Week (6-10 March)
- Castle to Cathedral Support – Royal Visit
- Kinloss Barracks Employment and Leisure Fayre (May) joint initiative
- WorldHost
- Fochabers and Forres announced destination status
- Northern Scot columns - 2017 Year of Heritage (on hold) and WorldHost

Promoting Moray as a place to live work and invest see [My Moray](#) & [My Moray Facebook Page](#)

For more information on MEP go to [MEP meeting agendas and minutes](#) also [MEP Facebook Page](#)

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## Tourism and Culture

### Visit Scotland Expo

Moray Speyside Tourism (MST) led regional representation at VisitScotland (VS) Expo in Glasgow (26 & 27 April) –The Made in Moray aisle comprised 12 stands, 4 of which were commercial partners (Ballindalloch Castle, Station Hotel Rothes, Johnstons of Elgin, Malt Whisky Trail) the remaining stands carried the ‘made in moray’ theme. Over the 2 days of the event, 335 business meetings were held with reps from more than 40 countries, welcomed almost 1000 visitors to the aisle, held 6 tastings and also received a visit from Lord Thurso and the Scottish tourism and culture minister.

Since returning from Expo, MST have received enquiries from a number of the companies we met at Expo, including Brittany Ferries, who want to build a new Moray itinerary, for the Scottish Destination Management Association, who would like to hold their conference here in 2018, and from Ashley & Newey – a coach tour operator looking to bring 50 people a week for 12 weeks in summer 2018.

Link to photos from the event:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/146446487@N08/albums/72157683306565396>

Planning for Expo 2018 has begun already. MST will once again occupy 12 stands at the event on 11/12 April 2018

### Moray Speyside Visitor Numbers 2016

Moray Speyside’s visitor numbers for the full year 2016. Whilst still requiring to be confirmed, the figures indicate an £11m increase in economic impact, a significant rise in visitors and an increase in FTE’s sustained.

- Total visitors to Moray Speyside have risen to 750,410 from 702,350 in 2015 – up by 6.8%
- Visitor days have risen to 1,799,430 from 1,751,580 in 2015 – up by 2.7%
- The amount of revenue generated by tourism activities has risen from £105,67m in 2015 to 117,64m in 2016 – up by 11.2%
- The number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employed in the region’s tourism industry has grown to 2,769 up by 9.6% on 2015.

### Digital Tourism Scotland (DTS)

Delivery of the Mar – June DTS syllabus has been challenging as the majority of our engaged tourism businesses have now commenced trading for the 2017/18 summer season and are less able / willing to allow themselves or their staff out to attend training / Continuous Professional Development. Accordingly, despite all usual careful planning and coordination of the workshop series (including running ‘joint’ events with Cairngorms Business Partnership) attendances at this most recent series of workshops has been lower than hoped.

In addition to the core workshop offering, MST worked to deliver a golf-specific workshop as a direct result of customer requests. MST paid for and organised this training, and while turnout was low, the impact was high. MST continue to promote the HIE Tourism Webinar series to Moray Speyside’s tourism businesses, and regularly circulate digital info and updates to its subscribers.

The syllabus for autumn 2017 has been concluded and will be sent to the contractor for approval in the next week.

### **Moray Speyside Golf Development**

MST is moving forward apace with a Moray-wide golf development group. Recent activity has seen a social media session specifically for golf courses. A marketing & PR plan is being put together in partnership which will focus on raising awareness of Moray's clubs to the visitor market and attracting additional visitors to the clubs over the next year.

A meeting of the group is arranged for Friday 28th July 2017

### **MEP Tourism & Culture Group**

Laurie Piper, MST Operations Manager has been appointed as chair of the Moray Economic Partnership Tourism and Culture Programme Group, following Margery MacLennan's retirement. This appointment continues to ensure MST is a key player on MEP. An initial meeting of the group has been held and a work plan is being devised to ensure that the group delivers to the brief outlined by MEP.

### **MEP Arts and Culture Sub-group/Moray Place Partnership**

Recruitment of Moray Place Partnership is now underway with a closing date of 15 August 2017. Interviews will be held on 30 August 2017. Advert currently on Creative Scotland Opportunities Website and will feature in Northern Scot and associated papers.

Laurie Piper, MST and Reni Milburn, Moray Council have both accepted invitations to join the sub-group. Initial discussions have taken place with Glasgow School of Art (GSA) regarding membership of the group. GSA indicated that there could be opportunities for GSA students to be involved in future projects.

A Heritage Lottery Fund Great Place Scheme Expression of Interest was submitted with HIE as initial lead partner. The successful application was based on a Moray collaborative approach building on Forres Creative Place award and Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere initiative. Moray has been invited to submit a Stage 2 Application by the programme deadline of 26 September with announcements on the successful Great Places in December 2017. Reni Milburn of Moray Council is leading on the development of the application on behalf of the Great Place Project Group.

### **World Host**

MST continues to provide support for the destination-wide World Host initiative which is moving forward with Gill Neill (Elgin BID) as the chair of the group.

### **Moray Winter Festival**

MST is supporting the development of a potential new event for Moray, which is intended to take place between Nov and Jan. It is hoped that Moray Winter Festival could become a key attraction for out of season visitors to the region over the next 2-3 years. The event will require support and funding to get off the ground, but it has high level political support both locally and nationally.

## **KEY ACTIVITIES IN NEXT PERIOD**

### **VISITSCOTLAND GROWTH FUND**

MST has 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 Visit Scotland's investment. It is intended that MST will submit a formal application to Growth Fund for the October application panel.

### **MST CONFERENCE**

The date for this year's MST Conference is 8th Nov – the event will take place at the Alexander Graham Bell Centre at Moray College UHI – The theme of the conference this year is 'FUTURE-PROOF' and a range of speakers have been confirmed including representatives from Trip Advisor, The Cairngorm National Park, Scotland's Towns Partnership and UK Inbound and Visit Scotland. Further details will be announced in due course.

### **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 relaunched at the MST Conference in November.

### **FRENCH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MISSION**

MST will be attending a VisitScotland organised business development mission to France in October.

### **MORAYSPEYSIDE WEBSITE**

MST has experienced a large number of issues with the MST website over the past year. Following extensive discussions with the incumbent contractor, it has become apparent that the site is not fit for purpose and was never going to deliver as promised. In addition to a wide range of technical issues, MST's website is fundamentally flawed and as such this will harm business going forward. Development and launch of new MST website which will enable MST to generate income and provide the functionality for both visitors and trade contacts is now a major priority. To this end MST will be seeking tenders for a new MST site in the next few weeks.

### **FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY**

Determining a sustainable business model for MST is an urgent priority. MST is therefore taking the first steps to consulting and researching the potential roll-out of a region-wide Tourism Business Improvement District. An application for seed corn funding has been submitted to the Scottish Government via BID Scotland and MST is hopeful of securing sufficient investment to enable a region wide consultation and engagement process to determine the best way forward for the organisation.

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## **Skills Investment**

The Skills Investment Group are now feeding into Convention of the Highlands and Islands (CoHI) each quarter to strengthen communication links and continues to meet with the Programme Managers from the MEP groups.

### **Skills Investment Plan refresh**

Commissioned by SDS, SDS Moray Council and HIE have jointly funded the preparation of a Moray Skills Investment Plan (SIP). Carried out by Ekos the plan includes a skills needs analysis and should identify any gaps in provision that need to be addressed. The SIP will also help inform development of the Moray Growth Bid as regards skills needs.

A joint presentation to the Moray Employability Partnership and the Moray Economic Partnership is scheduled for September 8.

### **Employer Engagement:**

The groups for the forthcoming Personal Track Safety course have been selected and the course will start on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July. Thereafter the delegates will move into employment with the rail companies.

There is ongoing demand for security staff particularly for the construction and rail industries so opportunities for people to retrain.

Kura who have taken over the SSE contract from Capita are looking to run a Customer Service course, which will provide direct entry into employment for successful completers.

### **Employer Investment**

MacDuff Shipyards have bought over Buckie Shipyard and it is expected that they will be expanding this provision and requiring new staff particularly new apprentices.

### **Events**

#### **Kinloss 39 regiment**

The first learning day for personnel and their families took place at Kinloss Barracks on the 17<sup>th</sup> May. There were a number of training providers and Universities in attendance and the event was attended by a number of personnel. Turnout from the families was less than expected however this is an event which will be held every year.

**Moray Job and You Careers** event is scheduled to take place on the 7<sup>th</sup> September on the Alexander Graham Bell Centre. 10 employers have signed up so far. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year for this event.

**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. 2 new FA frameworks are being introduced for 2018 – Food and Drink Manufacturing and Accountancy. Moray College UHI will be delivering FA in Health and Social care, Children and Young People and Business Skills starting June 2017 and have received 33 applications

from pupils in S5 and S6.

**Graduate Level Apprenticeships** – Robert Gordon University will be delivering a presentation on their new GLA programme to employers on the 13<sup>th</sup> July. They are offering Software Development for Business and IT Management in Business from September 2017.

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

- **Elgin Regeneration Capital Grant Fund**

The fund has opened again this year and Jim met with Billy Love (Regeneration Investment Manager) to explore potential projects and discuss town hall project as well as carrying out site visit. There are no suitable projects to submit this year.

- **Barmuckity Business Park**

HIE have approved grant funding of £1.9m towards the project for the development of phase 1 of Elgin Business Park (66 acres gross, 47 acres net). The legal agreement has now been signed and work is expected to start on the site in the next few months. There are a number of companies interested in sites already.

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

Planning permission has been granted for the road development, associated landscaping and surface water drainage at March Road, Buckie and it is anticipated that further applications will be submitted for individual buildings.

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

The Elgin south Masterplan has been approved at the Planning 7 regulatory Services Committee in May. The major planning application for 870 houses, 2 school sites and the Moray Sports Centre at Elgin South has also been approved at Committee in June subject to a S.75 legal agreement being signed.

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

Proposal of application notices have been submitted for 2 major development proposals which include a New learning centre at Lossiemouth High School and a Phased Sand & Gravel extraction at Spey Bay Quarry. These were reported to the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee in March and June 2017. Major applications that have been submitted include mixed use development including residential, commercial and associated infrastructure at Findrassie, Elgin and a Warehouse development complex at Malcomburn and are pending consideration.

Two major planning applications have been approved by the committee in June include a Borrow Pit proposal to support the Dornell wind farm project and 9 warehouses for Tamdhu Distillery.

- **Forres Enterprise Park**

Unit 7 has now been taken by Phoenix Industries Ltd, leaving only Unit 9 vacant. HIE are currently handling an inward investment enquiry which may be suitable for this industry. There is interest from a number of companies in further development on the Park, discussions are still in the early stages. HIE intend to take forward the next phase of planning for further building development over the next 9 months.

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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 have carried out a review of the strategic route options and presented a number of more detailed route options in during the Summer of 2017. This will be narrowed down to a preferred option in the Summer of 2018

### **Buckie Harbour**

Final Investment decision has been made on the Beatrice Offshore Wind Ltd (BOWL) project and Buckie has been asked to provide a contingency support facility for the BOWL development. Council Officers are currently in negotiation with Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) with a view to lease property to support contingency arrangements.

The Contract for Difference (CfD) round 2 is due to be announced in September 2017 which will impact on the viability of the MORL windfarm. Following a successful award the Council hopes to engage with MORL to secure the services of Buckie Harbour to support the MORL windfarm.

The Council has sold the Buckie shipyard to MacDuff Shipbuilding Ltd who is currently developing the site to expand their business in Buckie.

The Council is looking to secure Buckie as a base for support vessels to carryout Plug and Abandonment of wells in the Moray Firth prior to decommissioning of these platforms.

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