



**REPORT TO: PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
23 MARCH 2021**

SUBJECT: INDICATIVE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR MORAY

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to agree the revised indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) for Moray to be submitted to the Scottish Government by the end of April 2021.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (E) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the Review and Preparation of Strategic and Local Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee;
 - (i) **note the feedback to planning authorities on indicative Regional Spatial Strategies and the invitation to review and submit revised Strategies by the end of April 2021; and**
 - (ii) **agree the revised indicative Regional Spatial Strategy in Appendix 1.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduces a new requirement for RSS to be prepared. Authorities can decide whether they want to do this individually or jointly with other authorities. The strategies are intended to be a long term vision to 2050 and to identify the outcomes, need, priorities and proposed locations of strategic development.
- 3.2 NPF4 will be published in autumn 2021 and will have enhanced status forming part of the statutory development plan guiding spatial development, aligning infrastructure investment, setting national planning priorities, designating

national development and highlighting regional spatial strategies to form a national spatial plan.

- 3.3 The Moray iRSS was reported to the meeting of this Committee on 15 September 2020 (para 15 of minute refers). There is no formal description of what an iRSS must comprise, feedback from the Scottish Government suggest that it would consist of an illustrative diagram accompanied by some brief supporting narrative.
- 3.4 The duty to produce RSS has still to be enacted through guidance/regulation which is programmed over the next 12 months.

4. FEEDBACK AND REVISED STRATEGY

- 4.1 Feedback from the Scottish Government was sent to all planning authorities at the end of January 2021. The feedback is not on individual iRSS submissions on their content, rather a collective analysis of issues covered as a means of highlighting potential issues to be addressed and potential cross boundary issues. The feedback highlights that some authorities such as Moray have taken a good broad approach addressing a wide range of strategic carbon reduction, economic growth, infrastructure, environmental and equalities issues while other planning authorities' initial submissions focussed on a narrower range of issues, particularly infrastructure.
- 4.2 Taking account of the feedback and the opportunity to review the iRSS, officers have proposed the following additions and recommend these are added as shown in **Appendix 1** and submitted to meet the Scottish Government deadline of the end of April 2021;
- Tourism walking/biking connections into the Cairngorms National Park core montane area
 - Renaming inward investment areas as strategic economic investment locations
 - Referencing 20 minute neighbourhoods
 - Identify a pollination corridor along the dualled A96 where wildflower meadow planting will attract pollinators
 - Woodland planting opportunities reflecting the Council's Forestry and Woodland Strategy
- 4.3 The iRSS sets out strategic land use proposals and some of the proposals have been linked into the Council's Climate Change Strategy which was considered at the meeting of Moray Council on 10 March 2021. Officers will continue to discuss proposals with neighbouring authorities, who have expressed interest in Moray's proposals for a natural heritage park along the Moray Coast as well as woodland expansion and peatland management in upland areas.
- 4.4 The iRSS will inform the NPF4 spatial plan for Scotland and following the enactment of the duty to prepare RSS, a wider stakeholder engagement process will be carried out, followed by a series of projects working in partnership to deliver the Strategy.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

The RSS will help take a long term strategic view of a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues which need to be addressed and which will highlight and support Corporate and Community Planning objectives.

(b) Policy and Legal

The preparation of RSS is a statutory requirement under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, however it is still to be enacted and there is currently limited guidance to inform content at this stage.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

Preparation of the iRSS is a new legal requirement and has been particularly challenging given other priority workloads.

The full staffing implications of the new Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 will not be known until all regulations and guidance has been published and when these are reported to this Committee the staffing implications for services will be fully assessed.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities issues arising from this report. An EIA will be carried out for the RSS when the legislative requirement has been enacted.

(h) Consultations

Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), the Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Legal Services Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer), the Senior Engineer Transportation and Paul Connor (Principal Accountant) have been consulted and comments received have been incorporated into the report.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Preparation of RSS is a new statutory requirement introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The Scottish Government has provided

feedback to planning authorities at the end of January 2021 and offered an opportunity to review/update Strategies and submit by the end of April 2021 to inform draft NPF4 which will be published in autumn 2021.

- 6.2 RSS offer an opportunity for long term strategic planning around infrastructure and climate change and an opportunity to align objectives between community planning partners and other organisations.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: