



**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
SERVICES ON 14 AUGUST 2018**

SUBJECT: MORAY EMPLOYMENT LAND AUDIT 2018

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To report to the Committee a summary of the key findings of the Moray Employment Land Audit 2018 and ask the Committee to note the Moray Employment Land Audit 2018, which has already been considered and approved at the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 19 June 2018.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (3) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to industrial and commercial development.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee agree to consider and note, for its interest:**
- (i) **the findings of the Moray Employment Land Audit 2018, as summarised in Section 4 and Appendix 1; and**
 - (ii) **that the Moray Employment Land Audit 2018 at Appendix 2 has been agreed by the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 19 June 2018 (paragraph 7 of the draft Minute refers).**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) requires that the supply of marketable employment sites be regularly reviewed. The aim is to ensure there is sufficient supply of land to meet current and anticipated market requirements. SPP requires Planning Authorities to ensure that there is a range and choice of marketable sites and locations for businesses allocated in the Local Development Plan (LDP). The levels of effective/marketable employment land and take up of land are National Headline Indicators returned annually in the Planning Performance Framework to the Scottish Government.
- 3.2 The employment land audit has three key functions:-

- To demonstrate the availability of a range and choice of marketable employment sites;
 - To provide an overview of the supply and availability of employment land across Moray Council area and
 - To provide an evidence base for the monitoring and review of policies and proposals within the LDP.
- 3.3 Previous audits have been used as part of the evidence base for identifying the employment land requirements in the Main Issues Report which was explored in more detail in the associated Topic Paper.
- 3.4 The draft audit was sent to internal and external consultees and comments invited by 15 May 2018. Comments were received from the Council's Estates Service with updates on progress at March Road Buckie and site constraints. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) advised they had reviewed the draft but had no specific comments. In preparing the draft, sites have also been discussed with HIE and the Council's Estates Manager.
- 3.5 The audit includes four categories of land supply.

Established Land Supply – this includes all undeveloped land allocated for industrial/business/employment use in the adopted LDP or land that has a valid planning approval for these uses.

Marketable/Effective Land Supply – this is land, that as well as meeting business requirements, has a secure planning status, can be serviced within 5 years and is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport as defined in SPP.

Constrained Land Supply – this is land that is not considered developable within 5 years due to issues such as planning difficulties, ownership issues, infrastructure provision and physical constraints.

Immediately Available Land Supply – this land has planning permission, is serviced and has no major constraints to immediate development.

4. **FINDINGS**

- 4.1 The 2018 audit identifies that as of 1 January 2018, there was 154.31 hectares of land (net) within the Established Land Supply. This is a decrease of 2.02 hectares since 2017 due to construction activity and also the re-measurement of site I6 Railway Marshalling Yard Forres due to the construction of the new railway station. The emphasis on employment land continues to be within the five main settlements with more limited supply in the "rest of Moray".
- 4.2 80.27 hectares of land (net) across 17 sites is classed as Marketable/Effective. This is a decrease of 0.35 hectares since 2017. This is due to construction activity. The distribution of Marketable/Effective reflects the settlement hierarchy within the LDP. The audit highlights that whilst there is a reasonable area available the number and choice of sites across all settlements is limited.

- 4.3 Further land will require to be identified in the Elgin Market Area in the next LDP to improve choice and enhance supply. LDP2020 The Main Issues Report (MIR) explored options at Burnside of Birnie and Mosstodloch. In Forres there is a shortage of general industrial land and the MIR explored options at Waterford. At Buckie, the Council completed the servicing and infrastructure at March Road and sites are now being marketed. Identification of land in the Speyside area has historically been difficult due to the landscape impact, topography and access provision. Options to deliver mixed use sites that perhaps allow a number of small industrial units within residential developments are being considered for inclusion in the Proposed Plan.
- 4.4 The amount of land Immediately Available is 17.95 hectares (net) across 5 sites. This is a decrease of 0.12 hectares compared to 2017; and a reduction in the number of sites. This is due to I1 Greshop at Forres being removed on completion of development there. The shortage of serviced land ready for development is an issue identified in the Moray Economic Strategy and within The Moray Council Industrial Portfolio Annual Report 2017 reported to this Committee on 5 September 2017 (para 12 of minute refers). At March Road, Buckie servicing of the site was completed in March 2018 opening up the area for immediate development. Construction of the infrastructure and services has started for phase 1 of Barmuckity Business Park. Planning consent has recently been granted for a hotel and also for two self-storage warehouses. A third application for a petrol filling station with drive thru café is currently under consideration.
- 4.5 74.12 hectares (net) across 18 sites is classed as constrained. This means around 48% of the Established Supply has some form of constraint that is likely to prevent the land being developed in the next five years. A large proportion of this land is constrained due to ownership; this could be where the owners are unwilling to sell or are seeking alternative uses with higher land values. Part of the constrained supply is also made up of parts of sites that have physical constraints, for example parts of sites that flood or have steep topography. Some sites have infrastructure constraints identified and this usually relates to achieving safe and suitable access to the site and the costs associated with this. The constrained supply has decreased by 1.67 hectares. This is due to removal of land now occupied by Forres train station.
- 4.6 1.6 hectares of land was developed in the year to 1 January 2018. This includes the Maltings at Buckie (I4), buildings at Coularbank Lossiemouth and a garage at Greshop (I1). This is slightly higher than last year (1.23 hectares in 2017). At 1 January 2018 there was 2.31 hectares of land under construction. The sites under construction include sites at Glen Moray Distillery Elgin, Buckie March Road SE (I3), and at Waterford Forres. However it is noted that this does not represent all building activity, and is only that on designated sites or windfall sites that are not restricted to a single user. Other notable areas of activity primarily relate to sites in the countryside and expansion of distilleries. For example new bonded warehouses at Glenfarclas near Marypark, a craft gin distillery at Glenrinnest estate, Macallan distillery, and an office and workshop at Drumbain Farm Rothes. These examples account for over 20 hectares of activity. It also does not reflect any redevelopment of existing units.
- 4.7 A summary of the key findings and commentary on supply in settlements is attached at **Appendix 1**. A copy of the full audit is at **Appendix 2**.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The Employment Land Audit is a key part of monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the LDP, which delivers Corporate and Community Planning objectives. Ensuring sufficient provision of effective employment land supports economic growth by providing opportunities for new or expanding businesses.

(b) Policy and Legal

The preparation of the annual Employment Land Audit is a requirement of SPP to monitor the effectiveness of the LDP and ensure an effective supply of employment land is maintained.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

Preparation of the annual Employment Land Audit is part of the workload of the Planning and Development section

(f) Property

The Employment Land Audit includes industrial estates and sites owned by the Council. The Council's Estates section was consulted on the draft audit in April.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the report is to inform the Committee on monitoring of land supply.

(h) Consultations

The Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure), the Head of Development Services, the Legal Services Manager (Property & Contracts), the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Estates Manager and Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) have all been consulted and their comments included within the report.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 SPP requires that the supply of marketable employment sites be regularly reviewed to ensure there is sufficient supply of land to meet current and anticipated market requirements. Levels of marketable employment land and take up are National Headline Indicators submitted within the Planning Performance Framework.

6.2 The Employment Land Audit 2018 identifies that there is 80.62 hectares (net) of marketable/effective employment land, of which 18.07 hectares (net) is immediately available. Issues are identified with the supply of

serviced land for immediate development and the restricted choice of sites across settlements.

6.3 It is recommended the Committee note the key findings of the Employment Land Audit 2018 and that the Employment Land Audit 2018 was agreed by the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 19 June 2018.

Author of Report: Rowena MacDougall (Planning Officer)
Background Papers:
Ref: