



MORAY
COUNCIL

Moray Local Development Plan 2027

Evidence Report

April 2024



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EVIDENCE REPORT

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1. Introduction

The Evidence Report and Gatecheck are two key changes that have been introduced through the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, as amended, to the Local Development Plan (LDP) process. So far, both are untested.

This Evidence Report sets out the baseline information that will inform the new Moray LDP. The Report contains a summary of what the evidence means for the new LDP rather than the detail. A necessary and proportionate approach has been taken when considering the evidence as the Report is not expected to be a compendium of all available information. The Report is considered to provide a sufficient evidence base on which to prepare the new Moray LDP.

The Evidence Report contains a statement on the appropriateness of the Moray LDP 2020 spatial strategy, policies and allocations; the main issues arising from the evidence; compliance with Legislative Requirements; a Position Statement; an Engagement Statement; Site Assessment Checklists; and a series of 'Schedules'. Most of the evidence is set out in the 'Schedules' which are topic based and grouped into policy headings that reflect the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). There are a very small number of disputes over the sufficiency of the evidence with stakeholders, and these mainly relate to housing and infrastructure.

Extensive engagement has informed the evidence base for the new Moray LDP. The Engagement Statement sets out in detail how the views of the groups specified in the Act (children and young people, disabled people, gypsy's and travellers, Community Council's, the public at large and key agencies) have been sought and taken into account. Simultaneously, the Council is providing as much support and assistance as practically possible, to local community groups who have expressed an interest in preparing a Local Place Plan (LPP).

Moray is one of the first planning authorities to prepare an Evidence Report and submit it to the Gatecheck. Meetings and regular dialogue have taken place with the Scottish Government Division of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) on the format and proportionality of the evidence. The Report is considered to reflect these discussions.

Following approval by the Moray Council, the Evidence Report will be submitted to the Scottish Ministers for the Gatecheck to assess the sufficiency of the evidence to prepare the new Moray LDP. At the same time the Scoping Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which is a statutory requirement for the new LDP will be submitted to the SEA Gateway.

2. Appropriateness of the Moray LDP 2020 Spatial Strategy, Policies and Allocations

The Moray Local Development Plan 2020 (LDP 2020) was adopted on 27 July 2020. The LDP 2020 was informed by 9 main land use issues identified as part of the Main Issues Report (MIR) in 2018. The Monitoring Reports for 2020-21 and 2021-23 examine whether the spatial strategy, policies and designations of the LDP2020 are addressing these main issues. A summary of how the LDP2020 is addressing the 9 main issues is set out below.

1. Growth Strategy

A review of planning consents and completions shows that these have largely been in line with the Growth Strategy for Moray. However, approvals and completions have been more modest in the Tertiary Growth Areas of Lossiemouth, Keith, Fochabers, Mosstodloch and Aberlour. Recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic is evidenced in the increased completions across 2021/22 and 2022/23.

2. Providing a Generous Supply of Housing Land

All population projections need to be treated with caution however several trends can be drawn. Although the projected population of Moray is projected to decline (-3% from 2018 to 2043), data from National Records of Scotland (NRS) shows that the number of households living in Moray is projected to increase by 5% between 2022 and 2042. This trend is expected to continue which will be fuelled by the demand for smaller households. Similarly, the trend for an ageing population and smaller household sizes continues to be forecast and is an issue that is going to have to be addressed in future years, particularly with the lack of choice in the private market (i.e. a small supply of bungalows).

The Housing Land Audit (HLA) 2023 demonstrated that Moray has a 12-year effective land supply with a further 9 years from the LONG supply which can be drawn on if the relevant triggers are met. This approach to LONG term housing land has been recognised as good practice and allows for longer term infrastructure planning through strategic level masterplanned expansion areas.

3. Creating Quality, Integrated Healthy Places

LDP Primary Policy 1 (PP1) Placemaking is a detailed policy that addresses design issues that arise through planning proposals in Moray. The policy has been operational for over 3 years since the adoption of the LDP 2020. In conjunction with the Quality Audit (QA) process, this has seen improvements in the quality of information being provided in planning applications resulting in better decisions on the ground. The QA continues to play an important role in ensuring that all key elements of the policy are delivered including making significant improvements on areas such as improving character and identity, multi-functional open space provision, car parking, landscaping, embedding green and blue infrastructure to support biodiversity and climate change, and improving mental health and well-being. The QA has been revised to take cognisance of NPF4. Additional Planning Guidance on LDP 2020 policies have also helped to provide clarity on specific policy areas with is intended to help developers understand what is required to comply with policy.

4. Providing a Generous Supply of Employment Land

The Employment Land Audit 2023 demonstrates that overall there is 99.87ha of effective employment land. However, there is a shortage of industrial land in Forres and Speyside.

Similarly, 17 Barmuckity/Elgin Business Park, is progressing well and work is needed to bring new sites forward to ensure a continued supply of land. No planning applications have been received for new industrial estates. Pressure for leisure and retail uses on existing industrial estates is anticipated to continue and will require to be monitored to assess the effectiveness of Policy DP5 Business and Industry and DP7 Retail/Town Centres. There are emerging trends for development proposals such as Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) which is placing increasing pressure on the supply of serviced employment land. This is having implications for designated employment sites as these types of development are land hungry, offer very little, if any, permanent local employment opportunities, and do not fall within the use classes normally associated with industrial estates.

5. Taking an Infrastructure First Approach

Developer Obligations are being collected towards infrastructure including healthcare, education, transportation and a 3G pitch in Forres in line with LDP2020 Policy PP3 Infrastructure and Services and the associated Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance (SG). Site specific infrastructure requirements, methodology and rates to seek developer obligations towards the identified infrastructure requirements are set out in the statutory Developer Obligations SG. This SG is currently under review and is anticipated to be reported to this Committee in the middle of this year.

Moray Council facilitate a LDP Delivery Group which includes a wide range of representatives from NHS Grampian, Scottish Water, Scottish Gas Networks (SGN), SSEN Transmission and SSEN Distribution, Transport Scotland, and Council Services for Education, Transportation, Sports and Recreation, and Housing. This Group informed the LDP2020 infrastructure requirements as well as subsequent reviews of the SG, and similarly the Group will inform the evidence base for the new LDP and Delivery Programme.

6. Pressures on Moray's Landscape and Rural Cultural Heritage

There have been limited departures from policy EP3 Special Landscape Areas (SLA) and Landscape Character and policy EP5 Open Space. Impacts on the landscape from large-scale onshore wind developments and other types of energy developments remain a pressure. The Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework was prepared in response to the pressures of development associated with the National Grid around the wider Keith area. LDP2020 Policy EP5 has been largely effective in restricting new housing within environmental designations (ENV) such as open spaces. The loss of open space to accommodate development remains low.

7. Safeguarding and Promoting Biodiversity

Biodiversity enhancement is being delivered through new development since the adoption of both the LDP 2020 and NPF4 which places a strong emphasis on the nature crisis and climate emergency. Since the adoption of the LDP 2020 policy, applications must provide a biodiversity plan to demonstrate how their proposals safeguard and enhancing biodiversity. This has seen notable improvements in terms of the variety of planting and species that is being provided, incorporation of blue and green infrastructure, and measures such as bat boxes, swift bricks and hedgehog highways which are all standard features. NPF4 places significant importance on tackling the nature crisis. Going forward it is essential that biodiversity plans do not become generic

and are site specific to deliver maximum benefits. A biodiversity strategy, identification of nature networks, and further training on biodiversity issues will be undertaken.

8. Delivering on Climate Change

Planning for Climate Change and supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is embedded within a number of LDP2020 policies. PP1 Placemaking and DP1 Development Principles include criteria such as integrating multi-functional active travel routes, green and open space; maximising environmental benefits through orientation of buildings to maximise solar gain and wind shelter; supporting and enhancing biodiversity; designing open space to be multi-functional including green/blue networks; EV charging; cycle parking provision; avoiding areas at flood risk; dealing with surface water in a sustainable manner to have a neutral impact on flooding; and avoiding workable reserves of prime agricultural land or productive forestry.

NPF4 places significant weight on addressing the climate emergency and all proposals must demonstrate how they address climate change. To assist applicants planning guidance was prepared to support the implementation of NPF4 which requires applicants to calculate the lifecycle carbon from proposals to minimise greenhouse gas emissions as far as possible and adapt to current and future risks from climate change.

9. Rural Housing

The hierarchical policy approach introduced in the LDP 2020 has been successful in protecting pressurised areas from further inappropriate development. All applications within Pressurised and Sensitive Areas (PSA) have been refused and this position has been subsequently supported by the Moray Local Review Body (LRB) where reviews were requested. Siting and design policy requirements are also driving better located houses within the landscape and design standards have also improved with more traditional simple forms of homes being delivered on the ground.

Allocations

The LDP 2020 Monitoring Report for 2021-23 includes a table setting out the progress on allocated housing, employment and opportunity sites. This will be used to inform whether any allocated sites need to be removed and replaced with alternatives to ensure that there is a deliverable housing land supply for the Housing Land Requirement of the new LDP. This process will be informed by gathering information through the Effectiveness and Deliverability Checklist to substantiate whether sites are deliverable. If the evidence is not forthcoming proposed sites may not be included and existing allocations may be deleted.

3. Main Issues Arising from the Evidence

A summary of the demographic challenges and the main issues arising from the evidence that require to be addressed through the new LDP are set out below. The main issues are grouped in accordance with the NPF4 policies on Sustainable Places, Liveable Places and Productive Places.

Demographic Challenges

Whilst population projections need to be treated with caution, data from the National Records of Scotland (NRS) shows that for Moray:

- The population is projected to decline (-3% from 2018 to 2043).
- The number of 65+ year olds is expected to increase by 32% between 2022 and 2042, and over the same period the number of people of working age is expected to decrease by 12%.
- The number of 75+ year old head of households is projected to grow by 84% by 2043 whilst every other age range will decrease.
- Single person households are expected to grow by 17% whilst two adult households are expected to grow by 11% between 2018 and 2038. These households are subject to the greatest growth levels in Moray.
- The number of households living in Moray is projected to increase by 5% between 2022 and 2042. This trend is expected to continue which will be fuelled by the demand for smaller households.

These projections highlight the trend that Moray needs to address an ageing population with a declining work age population which will have an impact on the economy, housing and healthcare provision. The LDP will need to address this in its policies and proposals.

Significant investment from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF), Moray Growth Deal (MGD), UK Government Long Term Plan for Towns (LTTP), the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) and potentially the Just Transition Fund (JTF) will help to address the demographic challenges facing Moray and the main issues identified for the new LDP. This is discussed in detail within the Schedules of the Evidence Report.

Sustainable Places

- Moray faces the following risks from climate change: rising temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, increasing sea levels and a higher frequency of extreme weather patterns. This may present itself as increased droughts and floods, changes to the timing of the growing season and upsurges in pests and diseases, further coastal flooding, erosion and damage to infrastructure and property and possibly loss of life.
- The LDP has a pivotal role to play in tackling climate change and associated risks. This includes identifying nature-based solutions such as riparian planting and greening around buildings and locating and adapting buildings to deal with heatwaves and flood risk. The evidence presented in the report including ongoing studies will inform the LDP.
- Regional Coastal Adaptation Plans (CAP) to identify risk and consequences of changes to the coast are being developed and will inform the LDP approach in terms of coastal development or retreat.
- Exploration of a Regional Land Use Partnership (RLUP) through the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and LDP to support the delivery of a natural capital approach. This

involves identifying nature-based solutions to address climate change (e.g. peatland restoration, woodland expansion, natural flood management) and protecting and enhancing existing land assets to deliver ecosystem benefits (e.g. emissions reduction, carbon sequestration, food production). The spatial implications will be reflected in the LDP.

- A tailored approach to the implementation and delivery of NPF4 policies on tackling climate change, including carbon offsetting, will be considered for the LDP.
- Moray has experienced significant pressures from onshore windfarms over the last 20 years. Two areas of significant cumulative impact have/are emerging at Dallas/Knockando Moor and Cabrach which have resulted in significant adverse landscape and visual impacts. Despite Moray Council having up-to-date policy and landscape sensitivity studies and objecting to a number of windfarm developments as these are contrary to the LDP they continue to be consented by the Scottish Government. The cumulative impact of windfarms is a key issue to be considered as part of the approach to maximising opportunities for renewable energy for the LDP.
- The LDP will reflect the outcomes of the Moray Council Hydrogen Strategy. This will involve identifying sites for hydrogen generation facilities and in the longer term generating hydrogen from green electricity sources in Moray.
- Local landscapes are currently protected from inappropriate development through LDP2020 policy. NPF4 policy does not afford the same protection. Consideration will be given to a similar approach to ensure that Moray's high-quality landscapes are safeguarded.
- Keith and the surrounding area is coming under increasing pressure, on a piecemeal basis, from development associated with infrastructure for the National Grid. The Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework seeks to appropriately balance the demand for renewable energy infrastructure with local landscape sensitivities and the impacts of cumulative development. The Framework will be reflected in the LDP.
- Development of a Nature Network (NN) including the requirement to help protect 30% of Scotland's land (and coastal and freshwaters) by 2030 (30x30) for biodiversity improvement is currently being undertaken and will be reflected in the LDP. The NN may impact on land use designations. The protection of local nature sites is being considered through the development of the NN.
- Biodiversity enhancement and improvements will be delivered through a variety of means such as the proposals within the Forestry and Woodland Strategy, Natural Capital Assets Plan, and Open Space Strategy and these will be reflected in the LDP. Evidence suggests that biodiversity plans for development proposals need to be more site-specific and monitored and managed in perpetuity. This will be addressed through the LDP.
- A mechanism for offsetting biodiversity requirements may be necessary. Scottish Government guidance is awaited on this which will inform the LDP approach.
- The Forestry and Woodland Strategy will inform the RSS and LDP proposals for forestry, woodlands and trees in Moray. A multi-benefit approach will be taken (e.g. NN and natural capital) and opportunities for recreation and tourism identified. The potential for a Moray Climate Forest or similar approach will be considered through the LDP. The promotion of local wood sources will be considered through CWB.
- A Countryside Around Towns (CAT) rather than a Green Belt designation operates in Moray. This is considered more appropriate for the scale and pressures of development in Moray. A review of Countryside Around Town (CAT) designations will be undertaken to inform the LDP.
- Prime Agricultural Land (PAL) is currently protected through the LDP2020 and latterly through NPF4. This may have land use implications for the allocation of sites. The

approach to identifying locally and culturally important soils will be considered through the LDP.

- A number of audits and strategies will inform the protection and expansion of blue and green infrastructure in the LDP, and spaces for play, recreation and sport. This will include the Open Space Strategy, Play Sufficiency Assessment and Food Growing Strategy.

Liveable Places

- 4,850 house units are required for the 2024-2037 period in Moray. This is based on the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 'genuine growth scenario'. The HNDA has received 'robust and credible' status from Scottish Government. As there is an existing generous effective housing land supply and an effective 5 years plus supply, there is no need to identify additional land in the new LDP. However, consideration will be given to retaining LONG sites in the LDP to ensure a pipeline of sites is available, and whether any allocated sites need to be removed and replaced with alternatives in the LDP.
- There are an estimated 2,577 empty homes in Moray and further flexibility is added to the housing land supply by not including these in the housing land requirement. Consideration will be given as to how empty homes can best contribute to need.
- The identification of additional brownfield designations and increasing the capacity of allocated sites to reflect smaller households and the need for single storey dwellings will be considered through the new LDP.
- There are high levels of affordable housing need in Moray. It is proposed to continue with the current requirement for 25% of homes to be affordable. This is in accordance with NPF4 policy 16, and only in exceptional circumstances will a lower contribution be acceptable. NPF4 policy does not address piecemeal development and consideration will be given to addressing the avoidance of policy requirements through the LDP.
- Given the scale of local need for specialist housing a tailored approach is required through the new LDP.
- One or two public sites for gypsy travellers with a mixture of temporary and permanent pitches (15-20 pitches) requires to be identified through the new LDP. Buckie and Elgin are priority areas given the high level of unauthorised encampments.
- The spatial implications of short-term lets and the need for control areas will be reviewed through the new LDP.
- There are capacity issues with Education and Healthcare infrastructure that need to be addressed to facilitate development planned through the new LDP. The Education Authority and NHS Grampian and Health and Social Care Moray are working with the Planning Authority to identify and address the spatial implications of estate reviews, investment plans, etc. Delivery and timing of infrastructure is often dictated by the availability of funding and investment processes at both national and local levels.
- A Transport Appraisal will inform the LDP and this will be undertaken in consultation with Transport Scotland. This will identify pressures on the network. The findings of the A96 corridor review are awaited and these will be incorporated into the Transport Appraisal and will have implications for interventions and site selection in the LDP.
- Any rail investment/improvements arising from options identified in the A96 Corridor Review may have implications for the LDP in terms of safeguarding routes/sites.
- The Scottish Government target of a 20% reduction in car kilometres is more challenging for a rural local authority like Moray. Reducing the need to travel long distances for daily needs and services will be considered through the LDP approach to Local Living.

- Consideration will be given to a similar approach to the LDP2020 to require developers to provide EV charging points for residents, visitors and employees.
- Local Living will take a variety of forms in Moray. A network of centres will be identified through the LDP informed by relevant evidence such as the Moray Retail Study, Active Travel Strategy, Open Space Strategy and Play Sufficiency Assessment.
- High quality places are being delivered through a detailed Placemaking policy in the LDP 2020 and associated Quality Audit (QA). Consideration will be given to a similar tailored approach to address specific design issues in Moray for the new LDP.
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is a key piece of evidence to identify all sources of existing and future flood risk within the Moray LDP area and will be used to inform the development of the spatial strategy. The adoption of revised Flooding and Drainage Supplementary Guidance will ensure that all new development proposals are aligned with NPF4 Policy 22 Flood Risk and Water Management.
- The Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) Framework and Delivery Plan will inform the LDP. The Delivery Plan sets out how Moray Council proposes to support the implementation of its LHEES. As part of the LHEES process potential heat networks have been identified in Elgin, Forres and Buckie.
- A sustainable hierarchical approach to rural housing that balances delivery with safeguarding and protecting Moray's high-quality landscape is being successfully delivered through the LDP2020. Consideration will be given to a similar tailored approach that is based on detailed evidence rather than the generic urban-rural classification which is not considered to reflect local circumstances. Further house plots in Rural Groupings will require to be identified to support the hierarchical approach in Moray. The Cabrach is the only area identified as suitable for resettlement in Moray.

Productive Places

- Community Wealth Building (CWB) is a key policy area for the new LDP given the opportunities that CWB presents to tackling economic disadvantage and inequality, and the benefits it can provide to local communities. This correlates with NPF4 policy 11 Energy which sets out that "Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities". The outcome of the study being undertaken jointly with Highland Council to review the socio-economic benefits arising from energy related developments and whether these are being maximised, and if not, to develop a methodology to maximise benefits may require a tailored approach within the LDP.
- To ensure that there is sufficient land for business and industry and a suitable range of sites across Moray, an additional 53.6ha of general industrial land requires to be identified in the new LDP. There is currently an acute shortage of land in Forres and Speyside. This figure increases significantly if land hungry businesses such as distilling and renewable energy developments are included. 40ha is required for inward investment purposes.
- There are viability issues with the delivery of serviced employment land across Moray. Intervention is required to open-up and service sites, particularly in lower tier settlements.
- Pressures on existing industrial land exists from other uses such as recreational facilities, restaurants/cafes and car showrooms. These have the potential to change the character of the industrial estate potentially making it more difficult for heavier industries to expand or locate.

- Diversification of Buckie Harbour to support Operations and Maintenance (O&M) associated with offshore wind energy developments in the North Sea.
- Increasing pressure for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) is impacting on the availability of serviced employment land. The level of local employment associated with BESS is usually nil, and the scale of development could lead to the LDP being unable to meet demand from businesses from use classes 4, 5 and 6 which employ more people and are more suited to industrial designated sites. This is most acute in Keith and Elgin. Consideration will be given to whether the LDP needs to protect employment land from BESS and other Renewable Energy developments and National Grid infrastructure.
- Pressures from the large-scale expansion and storage requirements of the whisky industry, and developments associated with the energy sector including anaerobic digestion plants, BESS and infrastructure to support the National Grid are increasing in rural areas including on the periphery of towns across Moray. These are most acute in Speyside and the surrounding areas of Keith, Buckie and Elgin.
- At the Moray-wide level, there are no retail qualitative and quantitative deficiencies in convenience goods (e.g. food). There is a significant qualitative deficiency in comparison goods (e.g. clothes) however this reflects market demand and national trends.
- Supporting the regeneration and changing role of town centres is a key priority for the LDP. This includes promoting town centre living through the redevelopment and refurbishment of buildings and land which is reflected in the Elgin City Centre Masterplan, Town Centre Improvement Plans (TCIPs) and other supporting plans and strategies.
- Tourism is a major industry in Moray. Consideration will be given to identifying opportunities for tourism development including designating a Moray Forest Park in recognition of the importance of forests and woodlands to recreation and tourism in Moray. The Culbin to Burghead Coast SLA is sensitive to development pressures from tourism proposals and any increase in visitor numbers to fragile habitats such as Culbin Forest.
- NPF4 requires a landbank of at least 10 years at all times in construction aggregates. An insufficient landbank of sand and gravel exists in Moray. There is ongoing dialogue with local operators to identify opportunities to increase reserves and secure a sufficient landbank for the next 10 years and beyond.

4. Position Statement

The summary below provides an overview of the structure of the schedules and how they relate to policy areas within National Planning Framework 4. It provides an overview of the evidence discussed in each schedule and identifies the statements of agreement and disputes for each schedule.

Overview

The Moray Local Development Plan Evidence Report has been split into 18 themed schedules that provide a summary of the evidence base for each topic. The schedules are grouped to broadly reflect the policy areas within NPF4. Each schedule provides a summary of evidence relating to the policy areas within NPF4 as set out below.

Schedule	NPF4 Policy Area	NPF4 Policy Areas
Schedule 1 Climate Change	Sustainable Places Liveable Places	NPF4 policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crisis and policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaptation, policy 10 Coastal Development, and policy 19 Heat and Cooling
Schedule 2 Biodiversity, Natural, Blue and Green Spaces	Sustainable Places	NPF4 policy 3 Biodiversity, policy 4 Natural places, policy 5 Soils and policy 8 Greenbelts and policy 20 Blue and green infrastructure.
Schedule 3 Forestry, Woodland and Trees	Sustainable Places	NPF4 policy 6 Forestry, woodlands and trees.
Schedule 4 Historic Assets and Places	Sustainable Places	NPF4 policy 7 Historic Assets and places and policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty properties
Schedule 5 Energy	Sustainable Places	NPF4 policy 11 Energy
Schedule 6 Design, quality and place	Liveable Places	NPF 4 policy 14 Design, quality and place and policy 23 Health and Safety
Schedule 7 Local Living	Liveable Places	NPF4 policy 15 Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods and policy 23 Health and Safety
Schedule 8a Housing Land	Liveable Places	NPF4 policy 16 Quality homes and policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty properties
Schedule 8b Quality Homes – including affordable and specialist housing requirements	Liveable Places	NPF4 policy 16 Quality homes
Schedule 9 Rural Homes	Liveable Places	NPF4 policy 17 Rural homes
Schedule 10a Infrastructure	Liveable Places	NPF4 policy 18 Infrastructure first, 15 Local Living policy ,21 Play,

		recreation and sport, policy 23 Health and Safety, policy 24 Digital infrastructure, 11 Energy, and policy 12 Zero waste
Schedule 10b Transport	Sustainable Places Liveable Places	NPF4 policy 13 Sustainable transport and policy 18 Infrastructure first
Schedule 11 Flood Risk	Liveable Places	NPF4 policy 22 Flood risk and water management, 20 Blue and green infrastructure, and 10 Coastal development
Schedule 12 Community Wealth Building	Productive Places	NPF4 policy 25 Community wealth building
Schedule 13 Business and Industry	Productive Places	NPF4 policy 26 Business and Industry
Schedule 14 Town Centre and Retail	Productive Places	NPF4 policy 27 City, town, local and commercial centres and policy 28 Retail.
Schedule 15 Rural Development	Productive Places	NPF4 policy 29 Rural Development
Schedule 16 Tourism	Productive Places	NPF4 policy 30 Tourism
Schedule 17 Culture and Creativity	Productive Places	NPF4 policy 31 Culture and Creativity
Schedule 18 Minerals	Productive Places	NPF 4 policy 33 Minerals

It is noted that the aquaculture industry is not active within Moray and therefore the schedules do not cover NPF4 policy 32 Aquaculture.

Schedule 1 Climate Change, Adaptation

The summary of evidence outlines the sources and scale of greenhouse gas emissions in Moray, the likely climate risks affecting Moray and who this is likely to be impact most. The summary sets out opportunities to reduce costs of adapting to climate change including nature-based solutions and adaptation of buildings. Moray's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy sets out a framework for improving the energy efficiency of buildings and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from heating buildings. A natural capital assessment was undertaken in 2023 that identifies opportunities for natural capital investment in Moray. The summary of evidence also discusses the potential for Regional Land Use Partnerships to deliver a land use change and natural capital approach to achieving climate change targets.

The summary of evidence notes the work on Regional Coastal Adaptation Plans that identify the risk and consequences of change to the coast. These are due to be reported to Council before summer 2024.

No statements of agreement or dispute with the sufficiency of the evidence base have been submitted.

Schedule 2 Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure

The summary of evidence identifies that the North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership habitat statements provide a summary of habitats found in the area, information on the habitat status and some of the species they support. Moray Council's Biodiversity Study also provides a baseline of the biodiversity of the area which drew on a large range of data sources amalgamating these to identify species locations, priority areas and hotspots across Moray. Following on from the biodiversity study Moray Council has commissioned a nature network study to outline the options available for where the nature network will be.

The summary of evidence lists designated sites across Moray including Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Local Nature Reserves, and Local Nature Sites. The summary of evidence also notes the data available relating to peatland, carbon rich soils and prime agricultural land.

The summary of evidence references the Moray Local Landscape Designation Review 2018 that identified 18 Special Landscape Areas. The Moray Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Study 2023 is also identified which identifies broad landscape and visual sensitivities and constraints and opportunities at a strategic scale. The evidence report notes the ongoing review work in respect of Countryside Around Towns.

The summary of evidence references the Moray Open Space Strategy 2018 and notes that an updated strategy is currently being prepared with audit field work completed. The summary of evidence also identifies the data and information within the Moray Core Paths Plan, Food Growing Strategy and the Moray Play Sufficiency Assessment.

Nature Scot suggested some additional data sets and additional evidence sources. To ensure a proportionate approach some but not all of these data sets have been added to the schedule. A protected areas map has also been provided as a core document.

SEPA identified additional evidence and specifically suggested further evidence was included in respect of blue and green infrastructure. To ensure a proportionate approach and avoid repetition between schedules the additional evidence sources have not been added to Schedule 2.

Schedule 3 Forestry, Woodland and Trees

The summary of evidence refers to both the Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2018 and the Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2024 which includes a description of existing woodland in Moray, the environmental benefits, economic importance of the sector, and the recreational opportunities provided. The draft strategy outlines the challenges to woodland and forestry in the area and outlines opportunities for the visitor economy and links to studies on nature networks, carbon offsetting and funding opportunities through the Just Transition Fund. The evidence summary also references the register of Tree Preservation Orders and GIS datasets relating to forestry.

- **Scottish Forestry agreed the sufficiency of the evidence base with the addition of some data sets which have been added to the schedule.**
- **Comments from Nature Scot identified a list of data sets and additional designated sites. The additional sites have been added to the schedule and the riparian woodland data added to the schedule. The other data sets referred to by Nature Scot relate to nature conservation designation designations and biodiversity and it was not considered proportionate to refer to these within this schedule.**

Schedule 4 Historic Assets and Places

Key data sets providing the location of conservation areas, listed buildings, gardens and designed landscapes, archaeology sites and monuments and battlefields are held and regularly updated by the Council. The Moray Historic Environment Record contains known sites of archaeological and historic importance. The summary of evidence also references i Scheduled Monuments, the buildings at risk register, unlisted environmental assets and the programme of conservation area reviews.

- **The Regional Archaeology Service’s comments have been reflected in the schedule.**
- **Historic Environment Scotland are satisfied with the sufficiency of the evidence set out and requested additions relating to buildings at risk. Other observational comments made by HES were noted.**

Schedule 5 Energy

Details of operational, consented and proposed wind farms are set out within core documents with the evidence summary identifying two areas of significant cumulative impact. The summary notes the key areas within the Landscape Sensitivity Study 2023 where significant development pressure has been identified. Other energy developments including solar and battery energy storage (BESS) are discussed within the summary. The summary of evidence also references the location of key electrical grid projects, the Moray Council Hydrogen Strategy 2022 and a review of socio-economic benefits from energy development. The evidence summary notes the Just Transition Fund as key funding source.

- **Finderne Community Council provided comments in respect of the pressure of windfarms.**
- **Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Distribution did not identify any areas of dispute and identified additional evidence to be considered.**
- **Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Transmission did not identify any areas of dispute. Some minor changes have been updated in the schedule. SSEN Transmission provided comments on socio economic benefits from energy development. It was also observed that in some cases the close proximity of BESS to SSEN Transmission substations has restricted the ability to extend some substations.**
- **Speyside Community Council note that they support the summary of implications and have raised concerns about the national policy approach and cumulative impacts.**
- **The Cabrach Trust have provided comments and observations relating to the need for further renewable energy projects and cumulative impacts.**

Schedule 6 Design, quality and place

The summary of evidence sets out the approach to placemaking taken in the current and previous Local Development Plans. It sets out the role key design principles, masterplans and the quality auditing process play in delivering higher standards of urban design. A table summarises key improvements and the associated benefits. Links are made to the Council’s active travel strategy, open space strategy, climate change strategy, biodiversity duty report and Public Health Scotland’s Strategic Plan.

- **Moray Council Transportation, Public Health and Flood Risk Management comments have been incorporated into the evidence summary.**
- **Nature Scot did not identify areas of dispute but suggested adding reference to Designing Streets. Moray Council considers this to be policy context rather than evidence.**
- **SEPA did not provide specific comments.**

Schedule 7 Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

The schedule describes the different settlement patterns across Moray and the potential approach to Local Living for each including the rural context. The schedule references masterplan areas and Town Centre Improvement Plan and how these promote Local Living. An approach to local living for Moray is set out within the schedule with the cross over between other schedules and policy areas identified.

- **Comments from Moray Council Education, Transportation, Community Support Unit, Sport and Culture and Environmental and Commercial Services have been incorporated into the evidence summary.**
- **NHS Grampian did not identify areas of dispute but note the financial challenges associated with providing new facilities and also the challenges of staffing in more rural areas. They note the focus of NHS Grampian continues to be addressing capacity at existing premises.**

Schedule 8a Quality Homes – Housing Land Supply

The evidence report summary sets out the Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement within NPF4 and the demographic context of Moray. A summary is provided on the outcomes of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment 2023 including HNDA all tenure housing estimates based on 3 scenarios and sets out the reasoning for using the growth scenario to calculate the housing land requirement. Details on existing supply from the 2023 Housing Land Audit is also summarised. Targets for housing completions on brownfield land and within town centres are also discussed.

- **Comments from Moray Council Housing have been incorporated into the evidence summary.**
- **Homes for Scotland have identified areas of dispute and consider levels of existing housing need in Moray are more complex and much higher than currently being accounted through the HNDA. Concerns primarily relate to what has been taken into account through the HNDA and the deliverability of sites including LONG designations and brownfield land. Homes for Scotland have submitted a report by Diffley Partnership and Rettie and Co to support their position.**

Schedule 8b Quality Homes including affordable and specialist housing

A summary of the tenure requirements across Moray from the HNDA are included within the schedule. Information from the HNDA relating to accessible and wheel chair accessible housing is summarised in the schedule as is requirements for student accommodation and key worker housing (including MOD). As part of the HNDA a study into the accommodation needs of Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople was commissioned with the study results summarised in the schedule. The Moray Self Build Register is also referenced.

- **Comments from Moray Council Housing have been incorporated into the evidence summary.**
- **Homes for Scotland have identified an area of dispute and state concern that the level of market housing proposed under the Local Housing Land Requirement is insufficient to deliver the level of affordable and specialist homes needed. They state primary data requires to be gathered to ascertain actual requirement for specialist housing before any on-site provision is sought. A cautious approach in respect of the levels of accessible and affordable housing is required. Homes for Scotland have submitted a report by Diffley Partnership and Rettie and Co to support their position.**

Schedule 9 Rural Homes

The background and extensive analysis completed to inform an evidence led approach to rural housing in Moray for MLDP2020 is summarised with the ongoing monitoring of the policy approach noted. The role of rural groupings, the Planning Interpretation Note on NPF4 policy 17 Rural homes and the Moray Self Build Register is also discussed. The identification of Cabrach as a fragile community is also noted. Links to schedule 8a and 8b are noted.

A gap in evidence relating to consideration of how rural populations have changed is identified within the schedule. Release of 2022 census data is awaited and analysis will be completed when this is published.

- **No statements of dispute have been identified. The Cabrach Trust have provided comments relating to the work being undertaken to regenerate the Cabrach and the context behind the approach being taken.**

Schedule 10a Infrastructure First

The evidence summary includes the Council’s Learning Estate Strategy (including Delivery Programme), school roll forecasts (including schools forecast to reach capacity), and ongoing work reviewing each Associated School Group. The spatial implications for education are set out. Further Education and childcare are also discussed within the schedule. Ongoing work to review Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance is noted.

NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan, NHS Grampian Strategic Plan “A Plan for the Future 2022-2028” and projects associated with the Moray Transformation Programme Board are discussed. The capacity of primary care premises including medical practices, NHS dental chairs and community pharmacies is outlined.

The approach and ongoing work in developing a Moray Sports and Leisure Strategy Capital Investment Pan is discussed within the schedule.

The evidence summary sets out the water treatment works and waster water treatment works that currently have capacity. The evidence summary includes an overview of capacity within the gas network. The implications of expansion and upgrade of the national electricity grid is discussed and associated pressures is discussed within the schedule.

Digital connectivity, waste management, recycling facilities and cemetery provision are also discussed within the schedule.

- **Comments from Moray Council Education, Housing, Sport and Culture and Environmental and Commercial Services have been incorporated into the evidence summary.**
- **Scottish Gas Networks are in agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence set out within the schedule providing additional evidence sources.**
- **Sport Scotland are in agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence base and provided additional comments and data sources.**
- **NHS Grampian and Moray Health and Social Care Partnership provided a joint statement of agreement with some minor comments.**
- **Scottish Water are in agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**
- **SSEN Transmission are in agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence base with factual updates provided and incorporated into the schedule.**
- **SSEN Distribution are in agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence base with additional evidence sources suggested.**
- **Homes for Scotland have identified areas of dispute regarding the level of detail and referencing relating to primary health care facilities, the evidence behind the assumption of 80% working capacity for primary schools, the assumptions and methodology used for school roll forecasting and the timing of publication of developer requirements.**

Schedule 10b Transport

The schedule confirms the Council's commitment to undertaking a Transport Appraisal noting the budget allocation and ongoing work to support this. The schedule identifies some data sets, including 2022 Census data and Moray specific LATIS model data, that will require to be obtained to inform the Transport Appraisal.

The schedule provides a summary of strategies, studies and key data including car ownership information, public transport accessibility and provision, rail services, the Moray Active Travel Strategy, information about projects aimed at encouraging active travel, Public EV Charging - Moray Strategy and Expansion Plan, the Moray Hydrogen Strategy, 20% reduction in car kilometres, average daily traffic figures from permanent counters across Moray (Inter urban roads and trunk road network) and road safety .

Travel in and around Elgin is discussed in more detail within the schedule including the Elgin Transport Strategy developed in 2017 and a summary of information from permanent counter sites.

The outcomes of the A96 Corridor Review are currently unknown and the schedule summarises information from the Case for Change.

- **HiTrans and NESTRANS have noted their agreement to the sufficiency of the evidence base.**
- **Transport Scotland have provided additional data sources, commented on parking and identified better links were required between schedules around achieving targets to achieve 20% reduction in car kilometres.**

Schedule 11 Flood Risk and Water Management

The schedule summarises the flood risk plans and assessments the Council has in place in respect of flood risk including the Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside Local Flood Risk Management

Plan and the North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan. The summary includes a description of the flood risk and priority actions identified within the Findhorn Nairn and Speyside Local Flood Risk Management Plan. The summary of evidence notes the Council is working towards updating supplementary guidance on flood risk and drainage impact assessment and developing Surface Water Management Plans for priority areas.

- **Scottish Water have noted their agreement to the sufficiency of the evidence base.**
- **SEPA noted that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 requires to be updated to reflect recently published guidance and updated flood maps. To address this Moray Council have reached agreement with SEPA to prepare a SFRA to be agreed with SEPA prior to submitting the Evidence Report. SEPA also request that site appraisal methodology includes questions related to flood risk.**

Schedule 12 Community Wealth Building

The key evidence discussed within the schedule is the draft Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy and the Community Wealth Building Planning Policy Guidance. The schedule also discusses the Local Outcome Improvement Plan v2, Inequalities in Moray 2019 report, Locality Plans for New Elgin East and Buckie Central, information from the Community Asset Transfer register, and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. A recent report investigating the benefits that have arisen from the construction and operation of energy developments in Moray and how these benefits might be maximised in the future is summarised.

- **Moray Council Community Support Unit, Moray Council Community Wealth Building Officer and Business Gateway all agreed the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

Schedule 13 – Business and Industry

The Moray Business Property Needs Study 2023 and Employment Land Audit 2023 is summarised within the schedule. The schedule also provides a summary of evidence related to the Moray Economic Strategy, Moray Growth Deal, the draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy and Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework. Information from the LDP monitoring report identifies the pressure for other uses on industrial estates.

- **Highlands and Islands Enterprise agreed the sufficiency of the evidence of base but commented that reference could be made to the Enterprise Park Forres, Buckie Harbour Masterplan and Moray Hydrogen Strategy.**

Schedule 14 Town Centre and Retail

The schedule summarises the 2023 Town Centre Health Check and the results of a town centre perception study. This summary includes information about vacancy levels, clustering of non-retail uses and drive throughs. A summary of evidence from the Moray Retail Study 2021 has been included relating to the network of centres, requirements for further retail provision and neighbourhood retail requirements. The schedule also refers to Town Centre Improvement Plans, Elgin City Centre Masterplan and the Moray Growth Deal. Funding through the Scottish Government Place Based Investment Programme, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling Up Fund and UK Government Long Term Plan for Towns and Moray Growth Deal is also discussed.

- **No statements of agreement or dispute were made.**

Schedule 15 Rural Development

The schedule set out the economic characteristics and existing patterns of development and pressure across Moray and for each Housing Market Area. The environmental and natural assets is discussed with reference to Special Landscape Areas, Countryside Around Towns, soils and draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy are referenced. As identified in schedule 9 Rural Homes the lack of 2022 census data is cited as a gap in evidence. When this is published analysis will require to be undertaken to see how rural populations have changed over time.

- **Highlands and Islands Enterprise agree with the sensitivities in relation to impact of tourism and coastal areas but note that tourism is a significant income generator. They also comment discussions with energy developers should take into consideration of opportunities to maximise economic and social benefits from the supply chain and community organisations.**

Schedule 16 Tourism

Information from the Visit Moray Speyside Tourism Business Improvement District Business Plan and the Quarterly Visit Moray Speyside Business Barometer is summarised. The Moray Routes Development Plan and Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund is also discussed. Links are also made to the draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy, Moray Economic Strategy, Moray Growth Deal and Moray Business Property Needs Study. The Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray is noted as requiring updating.

- **Visit Moray Speyside noted their agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence base.**

Schedule 17 Culture and Creativity

The summary of evidence is informed by a cultural sector mapping report that was commissioned as part of the Cultural Quarter Growth Deal project. This provides an understanding of the cultural venues and groups across Moray. The work under the Moray's Great Places project is described noting the history, traditions and cultural events promote through this which has already informed the development of Town Centre Improvement Plans. The schedule also discusses the Forres Conservation and Heritage Scheme, Local Place Plans, Moray Economic Strategy 2022, the Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray, the Elgin City Centre Masterplan and Cultural Quarter Growth Deal project.

- **The Senior Manager for the Cultural Quarter project has agreed the evidence base and identified additional evidence that has been incorporated.**
- **The Moray Society provided additional comments on the importance of Elgin Museum.**

Schedule 18 Minerals

The schedule sets out a summary of evidence from the 2019 Aggregate Minerals survey for Scotland and the Moray Minerals Audit 2023.

- **No statements of agreement or dispute were made.**

5. Legislative Requirements

The matters identified in Section 15(5) of the Town and County Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, which the Council must set out its view on in the Evidence Report and which must be taken into account in preparing the new LDP's spatial strategy and the corresponding Schedules or Sections of the Evidence Report are set out below:

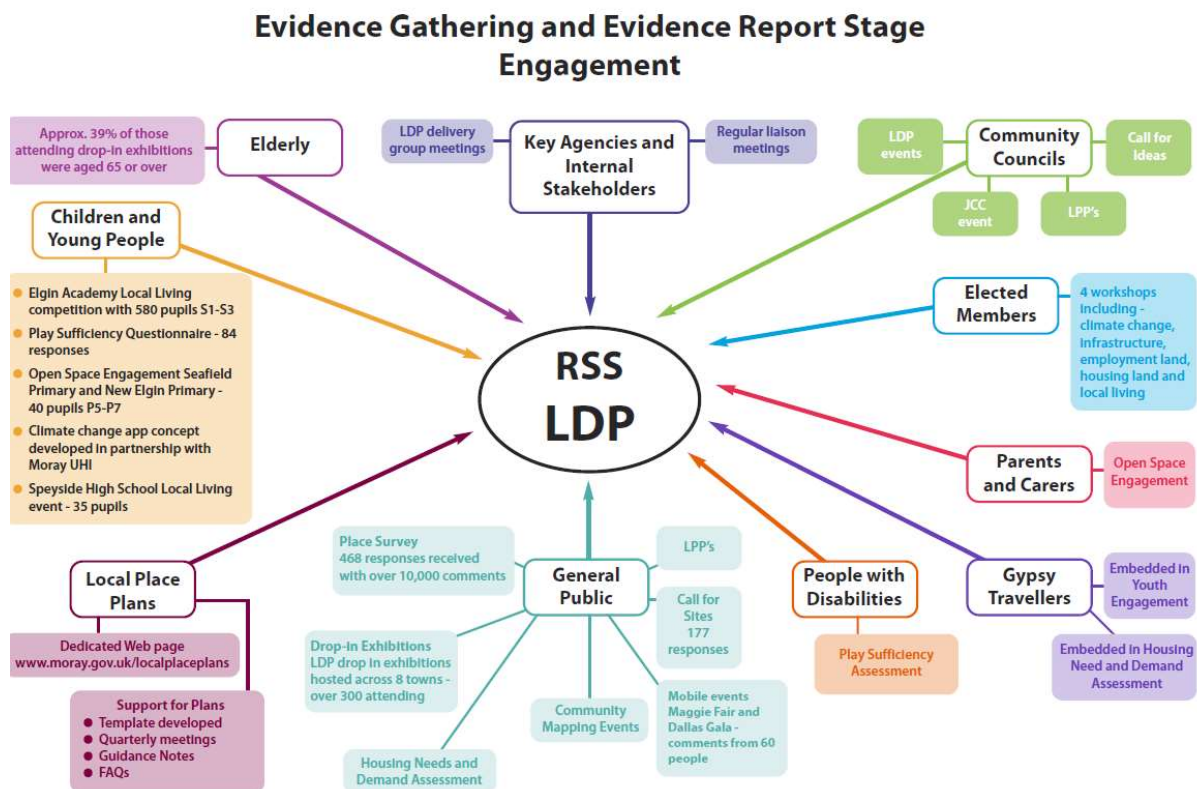
Section 15(5) of the 1997 Act, as amended	Schedule or Section of Evidence Report
The principle physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district	Schedules 1-18
The principal purposes for which the land is used	Schedules 1-18 + Appropriateness of the LDP2020 Spatial Strategy, Policies and Proposals
The size, composition, health and distribution of the population of the district	6 Design, Quality and Place 8b Specialist Housing 10a Infrastructure
The housing needs of the population of the area, including in particular, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people	8a Housing Land 8b Specialist Housing
The desirability of allocating land for the purposes of resettlement	9 Rural Housing
The health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and the use of land on those health needs	6 Design, Quality and Place 7 Local Living 10a Infrastructure
The education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those education needs	7 Local Living 10a Infrastructure
The extent to which there are rural areas within the district in relation to which there has been a substantial decline in population	9 Rural Housing
The capacity of education services in the district	10a Infrastructure
The desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural venues and facilities (including, in particular, but not limited to live music venues) in the district	17 Culture and Creativity
The infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems, systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education systems)	10a Infrastructure 10b Transport
How that infrastructure is used	10a Infrastructure 10b Transport
Any change which the planning authority thinks may occur in relation to any of the matters mentioned above.	Schedules 1-18 + Main Issues Arising from the Evidence

6. ENGAGEMENT STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Extensive engagement was undertaken to support the preparation of the Evidence Report. This statement sets out how the Council has sought stakeholder views in the preparation of the Evidence Report and how these views have been taken account of.

The graphic below sets out the key stakeholders and target audience for engagement, the varied methods used that were tailored to specific stakeholders and an indication of the reach of engagement. Further detail is set out in the body of the statement.



The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended requires the Council to seek the views of identified groups including the public at large, children and young people, disabled people, Gypsies and Travellers, Community Councils and Key Agencies.

The following sections of this statement detail engagement undertaken for each group and how this has been taken account of in the Evidence Report. Appendix 1 sets out the engagement undertaken in a table.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Extensive youth engagement was undertaken reaching over 650 children and young people in P5 to S6.

PRIMARY

Primary aged engagement focused predominantly on play spaces working with children from two primary schools in the north and south of Elgin. Pupils were given a cut out of a t-shirt for top things about play areas and a cut out of trousers for pants things about play areas as a fun way of capturing their comments. In addition to this mapping of where children play was undertaken for Elgin North and Elgin South.

Evidence Report

The information gathered directly influenced the approach to identifying informal play areas for the Play Sufficiency Assessment. An audit and site visit to a local park was also undertaken by primary school pupils from one school to inform survey work for the PSA.

SECONDARY

Two local living inspired events were undertaken with local secondary schools in Elgin and Aberlour. One of the events was a full school day with 600 students having sessions with experts on topics such as renewable energy, active travel, biodiversity, infrastructure and housing in the morning and using this knowledge to design their own 20 minute neighbourhood in the afternoon.

The key messages that came out of the Elgin session were the need to address homelessness with more affordable housing, bringing existing homes back into use and specialist housing for the elderly. Increasing biodiversity enhancement opportunities by increasing the number of allotments, ponds, wildlife areas and encouraging wildlife into existing parks featured heavily. The need for more recreational facilities was also a high priority including more leisure and sports facilities including astro pitches, basketball courts and swimming pools.

As part of the session pupils completed a Place Survey based on the Place Standard and over 10,000 comments were gathered. The key headlines reinforced the desire for more recreational facilities that are well maintained, secure and safe.

A summarised version of this engagement was undertaken at Speyside High School in a rural area with a smaller group of 35 young people. The key messages that came across were slightly different from Elgin. Promoting tourism opportunities for the local economy was identified as a way to capitalise on the River Spey for water sports and Speyside as a brand. Public transport was highlighted as an issue, specifically the lack of evening and weekend services and connectivity to train services to access Inverness and Aberdeen.

Evidence Report

Given the feedback from these sessions was site specific it is not necessarily directly attributable to the Evidence Report but there is a strong alignment with the key issues in terms of delivering affordable housing, addressing the climate and nature crises, creating conditions for local living and taking an infrastructure first approach.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Council worked in partnership with Moray UHI to develop/design a climate change game that would be delivered through an app for an audience of children and young people. Computing and Digital Design students created graphic content for a concept app setting out strategies to address climate change and the Council chose the best concept. Due to issues with resources, licensing and data sharing the app was never fully developed.

DISABLED PEOPLE

Engagement with an Additional Support Needs (ASN) parent and carer group through a Play Sufficiency Assessment Survey highlighted the limited inclusive and wheelchair accessible play opportunities within Moray. The comments provided identified the needs of different groups with reference to the needs of children with autism, mobility issues and wheelchair users.

As part of the engagement for the Housing Need and Demand Assessment a survey was undertaken as part of wider work to inform requirements for wheelchair accessible housing.

Evidence Report

Feedback from the ASN group was embedded within the Play Sufficiency Assessment that forms part of the Evidence Report. As set out in schedule 8b Specialist Housing as part of the HNDA evidence base, a calculation was carried out to provide estimates of the requirement for accessible housing in Moray over the next 5 years that will feed into the next plan.

GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

Interviews were undertaken with gypsy/traveller families on private sites during the preparation of the Council's Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA). Extensive youth engagement was undertaken in Elgin that has the highest number of unofficial sites used by travellers. Although engagement did not explicitly seek comments from gypsies and travellers, it is considered that their views will have been embedded within the survey information and feedback received.

Evidence Report

The accommodation needs of gypsy/traveller families has been taken account of through the Housing Need and Demand Assessment which has suggested one or two sites with 15-20 temporary and permanent pitches.

COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Community Councils were invited to attend engagement events and to make submissions to the Call for Ideas to highlight the key issues and concerns of their communities. A meeting was held with the Joint Community Councils in February 2023 on the new LDP process and another meeting is scheduled in May 2024 on the Evidence Report. It was considered this was a more appropriate and meaningful way to engage Community Councils in gathering the evidence to inform the new LDP as the technical nature of the Evidence Report would likely inhibit participation. This was highlighted by Finnerne Community Council who considered there was too much information to digest following consultation on the Energy Schedule of the Evidence Report.

Evidence Report

There was representation from Community Council's at the LDP drop in exhibitions and comments/issues raised have been embedded within this statement and have been used to inform the Evidence Report and will shape the place based plan.

LOCAL PLACE PLANS

In February 2023, the Council wrote out to all Community Council's and issued a press release and social media posts highlighting the opportunity for constituted community bodies to formally express an interest in preparing a Local Place Plan (LPP). To date one Local Place Plan has been submitted and is being reviewed by the Council and 6 community groups have committed to preparing a plan. In addition to this there are expressions of interest from a further 4 groups including two Community Councils.

The support offered by the Council to assist communities to prepare their LPP includes the creation of a dedicated webpage www.moray.gov.uk/localplaceplans and email address. The webpage includes a FAQ's section, linkages to Local Place Plan (LPP) Scottish Government draft guidance, a resources section is currently being developed to signpost communities to information including up to date community plans. This statement will also be placed on the webpage as useful information in terms of community views. An LPP template and engagement table have also been created and added to the webpage as well as being circulated to all community groups who have expressed an interest to date. In addition to this a series of quarterly meetings have been hosted by the Strategic Planning and Development Team. An online session was held in September 2023 providing an overview of the requirements of LPP and timeframes for submission. The proposed timelines to inform the Moray Local Development Plan 2027 seek a draft LPP by September 2024 for review by the Council with a finalised version submitted by the end of 2024. An in person session was hosted in Jan 2024 focusing on establishing readiness to prepare the plans and support needed from the Council. It is important to manage expectations in terms of support being subject to resource availability and the Strategic Planning and Development Team has been working closely with colleagues in the Community Support Unit (CSU) to maximise opportunities. The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for the end of April 2024 and will focus on engagement, key issues and information needs to feed into LPP.

LPP Meeting dates	Format
28 th September 2023	Online session introduction to LPP
29 th January 2024	In person Elgin Library Gallery – readiness to prepare and support needs
30 th April 2024	In person Elgin Library Gallery - engagement, key issues and information needs
June 2024 - date tbc	In person - tbc
September 2024 – date tbc	In person - tbc

KEY AGENCIES

The Key Agencies have been consulted on the relevant Schedules of the Evidence Report and involved in the preparation of a number of the studies cited in the Schedules that will become evidence to inform the new LDP.

Evidence Report

Key Agencies views and how these have been taken into account are recorded in the statements of agreement or dispute within the schedules.

PUBLIC

LDP EVIDENCE REPORT DROP IN EXHIBITION ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Eight drop in exhibitions were hosted across Moray from March to September 2023. Council Officers also attended two annual community events. The drop in events were widely promoted through press releases, social media posts and working with colleagues in the Community Support Unit to circulate to local networks. Overall, the events were well attended, and officers engaged with over 360 individuals.

The exhibition materials at the drop in events provided information on region wide issues and investment alongside local issues and explained the positive role of the Local Development Plan in

delivering high quality places and better communities. The opportunity was also taken to promote Local Place Plans.

The responses from the LDP exhibitions hosted across the 8 towns were collated and summarised to provide a snapshot of community views on an area and topic basis. See section below.

CALL FOR IDEAS

In February 2023, a Call for Ideas was launched which sought ideas on how to shape Moray. The Call for Ideas was promoted through press releases and on the Council's social media with emails sent to all contacts on the LDP mailing lists. A total of 195 submissions were received and there are similarities with comments raised at the LDP Drop in Exhibition events.

The sections below summarise the key issues/ideas raised at the events and Call for Ideas and where applicable where these have been taken on board within the topic based Evidence Report.

AREA BASED RESPONSES

ELGIN LOCAL HOUSING MARKET AREA

ELGIN

In Elgin, the focus was on the city centre. Issues raised included upgrading/expansion of the bus station or relocation closer to the train station. Addressing parking within the town centre, providing free parking and increasing disabled parking were seen as a priority. Introducing traffic control measures within the town centre to allow outdoor dining and other activities was supported. The continued need for a further crossing over the A96 connecting the north and south of Elgin was raised. In terms of active travel, the need for a cycle/pedestrian path from the business park back into Elgin was identified alongside general improvements to cycleways and more cycle parking. The cost, frequency and lack of connected public transport featured prominently.

Many ideas for improvements to the city centre were put forward including, relocating existing businesses from the St Giles Centre into the High Street and finding an alternative use for the building. The need to improve the appearance of the town centre featured heavily with suggestions to tidy up buildings, replace street furniture and signage, provide additional lighting and install public art. The lack of toilet provision outwith the St Giles Centre was also raised as a concern. There was support for regenerating Cooper Park Pond, the wider parkland including biodiversity enhancements and bringing Grant Lodge back into use. Young people highlighted the need for more leisure and entertainment facilities including astro turf pitches, basketball courts, outdoor cinema and street food outlets.

LOSSIEMOUTH AND THE COAST – BURGHEAD, HOPEMAN AND CUMMINGSTON

LOSSIEMOUTH

There was a focus on tourism and Lossie becoming a tourist destination with suggestions for the creation of an activity hub for cycling, paddleboarding and sailing. Furthermore, the need for a campsite for campervans, tourers and tents was raised multiple times with Sunbank identified as a potential location with reference to its community, amenity and wildlife value. The refurbishment of toilets was seen as essential to support tourism and the need to balance car parking with seating areas and pedestrianisation to enhance the overall appearance and use of the beach front promenade. Enhancing the accessibility of local beaches for wheelchair users was also suggested.

The lack of youth facilities specifically a youth café was raised as an issue and Station Park was identified as needing redevelopment/improvement. Several vacant buildings in the town were earmarked as being suitable for community use.

BURGHEAD, HOPEMAN AND CUMMINGSTON

Within the coastal villages outwith Lossiemouth the main issues identified were the lack of connectivity by public transport along the coast. The lack of access to affordable housing and the impact of Airbnb and second home ownership was highlighted. In Burghead and Hopeman there were concerns relating to the erosion of services with reference to loss of GP surgery, post office services and general decline in shops and services. The need for a community hub/meeting place was identified in both Burghead and Cummingston alongside improved facilities for children and young people. There was a desire for the Council to support progression on the Hopeman to Lossiemouth cycle route. Concerns were raised regarding coalescence of the villages and the need to maintain separation.

MILNES AREA – FOCHABERS, MOSSTODLOCH, LHANBRYDE, URQUHART AND GARMOUTH

FOCHABERS, MOSSTODLOCH AND LHANBRYDE.

FOCHABERS

There was a focus on the lack of recreational facilities for young people. Suggestions for improvements included expanding the play space at the playing fields and increasing the number of pieces of equipment, refurbishing the toilets and tennis courts. For older children, the need for teenage hangout, bouldering, climbing wall etc was raised alongside upgrading the existing astroturf, gym and addressing the lack of a swimming pool in the area.

LHANBRYDE

A significant deficit of facilities for physical activity were identified in Lhanbryde with suggestions including skate park, mountain bike tracks, BMX track, gym and tennis courts to address this.

MOSSTODLOCH

In Mosstodloch concerns were raised that any expansion of the village would need to include a new school as the existing school and Milnes High School are not fit for purpose. It was highlighted that the GP surgery at Fochabers Medical Practice cannot cope, and GP provision would need to be expanded to support growth. Furthermore, existing shopping facilities are insufficient to support an increase in population. Reference was also made to inadequate public transport provision.

GARMOUTH

In Garmouth there was a focus on lack of services and facilities. The need for a covered meeting area for older kids and not just toddler parks in new developments alongside the need for an indoor space for kids in winter was identified. There was also reference to having the toilets open in the winter and establishing a community hub. The lack of services including a shop for everyday essentials was raised repeatedly and the lack of local schools, GP surgery and this leading to isolation and lack of interaction. Public transport to Elgin was identified as an issue as timings and no weekends service restrict young people having access to employment and services. The cost of public transport was identified as a barrier and M-Connect supplementing existing bus services as an opportunity. It was highlighted that there is no direct bus service to Fochaber GP surgery. In terms of active travel there was a desire for more connecting routes including Garmouth to Lossiemouth,

Garmouth to Lhanbryde then Elgin, and Garmouth to Mosstodloch as a safe route to school. Lack of funding for EV charging infrastructure was also raised.

FORRES LOCAL HOUSING MARKET AREA

FORRES

In terms of housing the need for more affordable housing, rental properties and increased funding for social housing was identified. Suggested improvements to the local housing market included increasing the choice and mix of housing to encourage downsizing, setting up housing co-operatives, mutual home ownership schemes, promoting self-build, better designed accessible housing and development of tiny houses. The opportunity to re-use and reutilise existing buildings including homes above shops and bringing students to live in the town centre were also identified.

There were opportunities identified in relation to a new Forres Academy including co-location with other public services, the creation of a community hub with skate park, and outdoor gym set within a high quality open space. This was seen to help address issues raised in terms of the lack of leisure facilities and free activities for young people.

In terms of community facilities, the need to invest in community halls for example Rafford and Dyke to support connected community hubs was identified. Concerns were raised about service provision at proposed Lochyhill and Forres Enterprise Park developments, with a lack of amenities in the town to support such expansions. The lack of childcare facilities and the need to increase social enterprise for childcare was highlighted. Improved healthcare, education and facilities in general were also highlighted as a pressing need to support attraction and retention of people in the Forres area.

Regarding transport and active travel an improved active travel connection between Rafford and Forres was suggested alongside, EV charging within the town in better locations, bike hire and Moray Car Share being expanded in High Street location. The decline in public transport was raised as a concern including lack of connectivity to Kinloss.

There was particular interest in greenspaces across Forres with a desire to connect them with wildflower corridors and paths, alongside the identification of areas of open space that can be left to become wild areas. The lack of high quality open space in new developments as part of the South Forres expansion was raised including the lack of a hierarchy of open space and the need to learn from this. Future developments need to create high quality, multi-functional flexible open space that is maintained. The need to protect existing assets like Grant Park and not overburden with additional uses was raised alongside the importance of Market Green to the setting of Forres. The need to improve the play offer in Grant Park was identified alongside the creation of a biodiversity corridor within the park.

Town centre regeneration ideas included re-opening Falconer Museum, upgrading toilets and alternative new toilet provision in the High Street that is open in the evenings. There is a demand for theatre, cinema, art and exhibition space that needs to be supported and there were suggestions around a Midsteeple Quarter type project.

DALLAS

Concerns were raised regarding the lack of progress in developing the brownfield sites in Dallas which are an eyesore. The lack of facilities for older children was highlighted and the need for a teen hangout area and provision for basketball and football.

BUCKIE LOCAL HOUSING MARKET AREA

BUCKIE

There was a focus on ideas for improving Buckie, active travel enhancements included developing a footbridge that is fully accessible and lit crossing the Buckie Burn and joining into Munro Way creating an east/west connection. Improvements to greenspaces within Buckie were also identified including additional seating, allotments, gym and improved lighting were suggested within parks. Other ideas included redeveloping the outdoor pool at Strathlene, creating outdoor cooking areas and hosting festivals to showcase local produce, the area and the coastline. Better more attractive lighting a Cluny Square was also referenced. The need for upgrading infrastructure to support new development in Buckie was also identified and questions raised around the suitability of the secondary school to support new development.

PORTGORDON

Concerns were raised regarding poor internet connectivity, the lack of bus stops in the village and the need to make improvements to enhance the physical ability of residents to move around Portgordon given the gradients. Supporting community ownership and plans for Portgordon harbour was identified as a priority.

SPEYSIDE HOUSING MARKET AREA

ABERLOUR, ARCHIESTOWN AND DUFFTOWN

Within the Speyside area the affordability and availability of housing for locals and young people was a major concern with the demand for housing outstripping supply leading to young families leaving the area. A potential solution identified was utilising empty homes. Not unlike other communities across Moray the lack of facilities for both locals and tourists was identified as a concern with reduced postal and banking services. Young people highlighted the tourism potential of the River Spey and the opportunity for water based activities. The lack of leisure and recreational facilities was also raised with need identified for more youth club provision, eateries, cinema, gym and pop up shops. Poor broadband connectivity was highlighted as an issue. The restoration of the Clocktower in Dufftown was a suggested improvement alongside the upgrading of football pitches to astroturf. In terms of the economy a green energy hub in Speyside was suggested that promotes local innovation and creates exciting jobs for young people to get them to stay or come back to the area. Poor public transport connections, a new active travel route linking Aberlour and Archiestown and upgrading of existing routes were raised as issues alongside various road safety concerns.

KEITH HOUSING MARKET AREA

KEITH

There was a focus on transport with road safety concerns raised at the schools and A96. A number of active travel improvements were identified for example connections east to west in the town as well as upgrades to existing paths and ongoing maintenance.

In terms of facilities the reopening of toilets, a water stand in the Square and additional EV charging points was raised. The reuse of existing buildings was seen to support local businesses and provide housing and repurposing the resource centre was also raised. There were also concerns in respect of the amount of energy infrastructure work happening in and around Keith.

Evidence Report

The site specific comments above have informed the evidence for the new Plan and will be used to create the place based plan.

TOPIC RESPONSES

TACKLING THE CLIMATE AND NATURE CRISIS

There is support within communities for the creation of a wildlife corridor/pollination corridor along the Moray Coast. The development of a Pollinator Strategy for the area was raised. Ideas for mitigating climate change and enhancing biodiversity included allowing all road verges to grow, planting more trees, expanding woodland cover and social just use of Council owned land. Engaging with local industry e.g. Baxters, Walkers and Johnstons to sponsor vast wildlife areas was suggested.

Increasing the use of renewable energy including hydrogen for transport was raised multiple times, although not all supportive of wind energy. Upgrading all existing housing stock and supporting all village halls and community buildings to be net zero with insulation, solar panels and heat pumps was identified as a key action. Furthermore, all housing should be built with solar panels as standard, internal and external insulation and other renewables. Community energy schemes were seen to reduce bills, create jobs and reduce fuel poverty. Creating local renewable energy hubs was suggested to demonstrate technologies that could be adopted by volume builders. An opportunity was identified for covered solar panel/supplemented by recycled car batteries for electric vehicle charging across Moray.

The Call for Ideas also generated a lot of suggestions to help address the climate and nature crises. Ideas included the creation of a Findhorn to Spey nature network along the coast and one linking into Cairngorms National Park. There is a desire for Moray to become an area of environmental interest and safeguarded with development to attract green tourism. There was also reference to the coast having national park status and an aspiration for Moray to be identified as the first “Rewilding Council” in Scotland.

A suggestion was made for Moray to be a leading demonstration Council in Scotland (and in Europe) in terms of climate resilient, flourishing new (green) economy, demonstrating the empowerment and resilience of entrepreneurial, socially inclusive, community-led, net zero, ecologically regenerative development and innovation. A further idea was to set up a Moray renewable energy company as a public generator of energy.

Evidence Report

Schedule 1 Climate Change sets out ongoing work by the Council that contributes to addressing the climate change crisis and will help deliver many of the ideas and comments including the Forestry and Woodland Strategy, Moray Hydrogen Strategy and the Natural Capital Assessment. These are important pieces of evidence that will inform the direction of the new plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In terms of Moray wide infrastructure requirements there was reference to ensuring high quality internet provision across the region. The need for better healthcare facilities at Dr Grays including more parking, better maternity and mental health services was identified. All communities highlighted the lack of healthcare facilities within towns and villages and need for more to support new housing development. Addressing the affordability and availability of nursery places and increasing opportunities for outdoor learning and early years STEM was also raised as an issue.

The Call for Ideas generated the following ideas for creating better communities. The need for facilities including the provision of more childcare facilities and nurseries, GPs, chemists and shops was identified. There was a desire for schools to act as hubs for neighbourhoods and need for new arts/culture facilities and provision of multi-purpose adaptable venues. Additional gym and leisure facilities alongside more play park provision was highlighted as important to support health. The need for the provision of bus shelters in rural areas was also identified.

Evidence Report

Schedule 7 Local Living identifies a number of implications for the next LDP that reflect these comments. This includes providing opportunities for appropriate educational facilities including childcare opportunities embedded within communities. There is also reference to providing opportunities for community indoor space. Schedule 10a identifies childcare provision as an issue and that a working group has been set out to explore potential solutions and this will be embedded into the LDP 2027. An evidence baseline of healthcare provision has also been set out within the schedule and the spatial implications of NHS Grampian healthcare estate decisions and investment will be identified in the LDP 2027.

SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The economic opportunities associated with tourism in Moray featured with explicit reference to investing in green tourism and the potential for Moray to be a leader in this area. There was support for a Moray Coastal Natural Heritage Park and the associated benefits to wellbeing, tourism and the economy. Locations across Moray's coastal towns were identified as having potential as campsites.

The need to create more full-time jobs was identified noting the prevalence of part-time jobs in contributing to the high gender pay gap. Moray was seen to be an ideal location for remote workers, and this could be supported further by investing in broadband and co-working spaces closer to where people live. The economic, environmental and social benefits associated with investing in community energy schemes were highlighted as an opportunity a number of times. The wider distribution of windfarm community benefits across Moray to share the economic benefit was also highlighted.

Evidence Report

Schedule 11 Tourism acknowledges the importance of the tourism industry to the Moray economy and the need to identify suitable locations for tourism uses. Exploring the opportunity for a Moray Forest Park is also specifically identified.

HOUSING

Across the whole of Moray, a major concern raised was the lack of affordable housing. The housing market needs to be delivering a variety of housing tenures. There were significant levels of support for bringing vacant and derelict land back into use and utilising space above shops in town centres with reference to using compulsory purchase orders to achieve this. Concerns were also raised about protecting green spaces, wild land, agricultural land and minimising housing construction on greenfield land to avoid urban sprawl.

Evidence Report

Schedule 8b Specialist housing acknowledges the high levels of affordable housing need evidenced in the Housing and Need Demand Assessment (HNDA). It is proposed to continue with the current

local policy requirement for all developments of 4 or more houses to provide 25% affordable. There is also reference to potentially seeking higher contributions.

Schedule 8a Housing Land sets out a target of 10% is proposed of housing completions over the next 10 years being completed on brownfield sites and a target of 5% is proposed of housing completions over the next 10 years within town centres. This ambitious target can only be achieved through additional funding being sourced to meet the additional costs and challenges of developing brownfield sites and current viability issues.

TRANSPORT AND ACTIVE TRAVEL

There were concerns expressed regarding the cost of public transport and the need to invest in improved bus and train services across the region. The lack of public transport in rural areas and along the coast and reliability of service was a major concern. The opportunity for M-Connect to supplement existing bus services was identified with more investment to extend the service. Investment in new active travel routes to create connections within towns, connecting main towns to smaller surrounding villages and upgrading of existing networks was also highlighted as an issue. The need to repair Cloddach and Pittendreich bridges was identified.

In terms of the Call for Ideas suggestions primarily related to improvements to existing transportation infrastructure, such as tackling congestion on A96/ Dual A96/Bypass for Elgin and Keith and improving the A95, A98 and A941. The importance of dualling the A96 to provide safe connectivity in shaping the future of Moray was highlighted. Delivering better transport links to attract business was raised alongside the need for more/better active travel links across Moray and filling missing links. Ideas for public transport improvements included increasing the number of services, providing evening services and reinstating the rail connection to Dufftown. A general comment was made regarding reducing speeds in towns to 20mph.

Evidence Report

Schedule 10b Transport sets out that despite being a rural local authority Moray has relatively high statistics for Active Travel as a 'main mode of travel' than a large percentage of other local authority areas in Scotland. The schedule sets out the commitment to active travel and details planned and delivered investment in active travel routes to improve connectivity. Plans to expand the M-connect service are also referenced.

REGENERATING TOWN CENTRES AND PREVIOUSLY USED LAND

The need to support the nighttime economy and culture to increase footfall and vibrancy of Moray's town centres was viewed as being important. In terms of bringing sites and buildings back into use reference was made to clear advice and support from the planning service when developing brownfield sites. It was also identified that Developer Obligation exemptions for brownfield sites is needed otherwise these sites are unviable.

Ideas generated from the Call for Ideas included provision of pop up shops and smaller more affordable retail units to replace large national retailers that have left. The need to diversify uses in town centres such as event/recreation and hot desking spaces was raised. The redevelopment of town centres for residential, incentivisation of the redevelopment of brownfield land and stopping greenfield development was identified. Other enhancements included tidying up town centres and pedestrianisation incorporating tree/boulevard planting and seating. The redevelopment of the St Giles Centre was specifically identified as an opportunity for a market or gallery, as well as building an iconic inspirational new theatre/town hall.

Evidence Report

Schedule 14 Town Centres and Retail refers to the need to consider a new use for the St Giles Centre and delivery of Town Centre Improvement Plans and Elgin City Centre Masterplan. These adopted plans already identify many of the improvement ideas submitted for town centres. Supporting the development of brownfield sites is addressed in the housing section.

SAFEGUARDING OPEN SPACES AND LANDSCAPES

Extensive information was gathered from primary aged school children in terms of their views on play spaces where they live. The key issues raised include the lack of provision for different ages of children across play spaces, existing equipment needing to be replaced, the lack of natural/imaginative play opportunities, limited opportunities for exciting or challenging play, poor accessibility for wheelchair users and lack of equipment for those with disabilities. The lack of nature within wider greenspaces was also highlighted with suggestions for more tree planting and wildflower areas. In secondary aged young people, the focus was on the lack of recreational facilities in particular a need for more astro turf pitches, skateparks and a lack of pump tracks and covered teenage hangouts.

The Call for Ideas generated the following suggestions including embedding nature based solutions into development and new development to provide habitat/wildlife corridors, allotments, fruit trees, green/blue networks (swales, ponds, rain gardens, reedbeds), incorporate swift/bee bricks, and spaces for hedgehog movement.

Evidence Report

All the information gathered from the engagement with schools and surveys relating to formal and informal play has been taken on board and influenced the Play Sufficiency Assessment prepared to support the Evidence Report. The findings will inform future planning and policy decisions to create a more play-friendly community.

Schedule 2 Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure sets out that a study has been commissioned to help inform the development of a nature network/s across Moray. In terms of biodiversity enhancement in new developments the schedule identifies the need for improved site specific biodiversity plans that need to be deliverable and monitored. This approach will inform the future direction for the LDP 2027.

Appendix 1 Table of Engagement Events

Location	Format	Date	Exhibition or Event Content
Online Teams	Moray Council Community Engagement Group	10 January 2023	Presentation and seeking comment on Participation Statement in Development Plan Scheme 2023

Online Zoom	Joint Community Councils of Moray meeting	9 February 2023	Overview of proposed engagement for LDP. Overview of new process Identification early engagement opportunities
Forres Forres Town Hall	Drop in exhibition with community mapping sessions	Sat 4 March 10am – 3pm	Forres Town Centre Improvement Plan Active Travel improvements Regeneration proposals Forres Town Hall Forres Learning Estate Review Falconer Museum
Elgin Moray UHI	Market stall at launch of Community Engagement Strategy	Mon 20 March 12:30 – 4pm	Networking and sharing best practice. Overview proposed engagement for LDP.
Elgin Seafield Primary School New Elgin Primary School	Engagement session	22 March 2023	Mapping of informal play in Elgin North and Elgin South. Audit of good and bad of play areas
Aberlour Fleming Hall	Drop in exhibition	Sat 22 April 2023 10am – 3pm	Toilets consultation Moray Growth Deal – affordable housing project at Speyview Aberlour Aberlour Town Centre Improvement Plan Active Travel Food Growing?
Dufftown Mortlach Memorial Hall	Drop in exhibition	Thurs 27 April 2023 3 – 8pm	Moray Growth Deal/Dufftown and District Community Association – affordable housing project at Hillside Farm Dufftown Clocktower Dufftown Town Centre Improvement Plan

Elgin Elgin Town Hall	Town Centre Summit Exhibition	Thurs 4 May Lunchtime exhibition	Customised to town centres Regeneration/investment across Moray
Elgin Elgin Academy	Elgin Academy – 20 minute neighbourhood engagement	Mon 15 May 2023 All day event	Place survey based on Place Standard Elgin exhibition boards
Elgin Town Hall	Drop in Exhibition with community mapping sessions	Sat 27 May 2023 10am – 3pm	Elgin City Centre Masterplan Moray Growth Deal Elgin Specific projects Levelling Up Fund projects
Lossie Town Hall	Drop in exhibition	Sat 17 June 2023 10am – 3pm	Lossie Town Centre Improvement Plan Lossie to Hopeman Active Travel Route
Fochabers Fochabers Institute	Drop in exhibition	Thurs 22 June 2023 4-8pm	Mosstodloch Masterplan
Aberlour Speyside High School	Engagement session on local living in a rural context	Speyside High School 23 June 2023	Local living presentation Facilitated sessions to draw up plans for Aberlour to support local living.
Maggie Fair (market stall booked)	Stand with information on Local Place Plans and identifying key issues for LDP	Saturday 24 2023 June 1-4pm	Pop ups on LPP and LDP
Dallas Gala (market stall booked)	Stand with information on Local Place Plans and identifying key issues for LDP	Sunday 2 July 2023 1 - 4pm	Pop ups on LPP and LDP
Buckie North Church Hall (booked via Tracey R)	Drop in exhibition	Sat 26 August 2023 10am – 3pm	Buckie Town Centre Improvement Plan Buckie Harbour Masterplan Active travel improvement projects
Keith Longmore Community Hall	Drop in exhibition	Sat 9 September 2023 10am - 3pm	Keith Town Centre Improvement Plan Blackhillock Masterplan

Burghead Community Hall	Coffee morning	Sat 4th November 2023.	Gather views/comments from Burghead community
Joint Community Councils of Moray (JCC)	Meeting	9 May 2024	Evidence Report

7. Evidence Report Schedules

Issue: Topic / Place	1. Climate Change, Adaptation
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 15 (5)- the principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district • Section 3G- policies regarding low and zero carbon generating technologies in new buildings. • Section 15(5)- the infrastructure of the district (including systems for the supply of water and energy)
Links to Evidence	<p>CD007 Moray Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 CD008 Climate Change Routemap 2023 Action Update CD009 Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (2019-24) CD010 Moray Council draft LHEES and Delivery Plan April 2024 CD011 Measuring nocturnal near surface urban heat island density in the small, mid latitude city of Inverness, George Gunn 2023 CD012 Natural Capital Report Moray Council April 2024 CD013 UK Local Authority and Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions National Statistics 2005 -2021 CD014 Local Government Benchmarking Framework</p>
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context	
<p>National Planning Framework 4 has significantly increased the requirements relating to carbon reduction, renewable energy generation and biodiversity enhancement through the planning system including the following requirements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LDP’s must address the global climate change emergency and nature crisis by ensuring the spatial strategy will reduce emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change by promoting nature recovery and restoration. • Spatial strategy should be designed to reduce, minimise or avoid greenhouse gas emissions, guiding development to sustainable locations. The strategy should be informed by an understanding of the impacts of the proposals on greenhouse gas emissions. • Set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings. • *Consider how to adapt coastlines to the impacts of climate change. This should recognise that rising sea levels and more extreme weather events resulting from climate change will potentially have a significant impact on coastal and island areas. • (NPF4 requirements relating to nature networks, energy, sustainable transport, and woodland all feature in separate schedules in the Evidence Report). 	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009</p> <p>The Act places a statutory duty on all public bodies to act to deliver on the national climate change targets. Scotland aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2045.</p> <p>Under the Act, Moray Council has three main duties;</p>	

- **Mitigation:** To contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Adaptation:** To help Moray adapt to the changing climate
- **Sustainability:** To act in a sustainable manner.

The council must report on compliance with these duties annually in accordance with the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies: Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015 and subsequent amendments.

This council is required to provide the following information in annual climate change reports:

- its target date for achieving zero direct emissions;
- its targets for reducing indirect emissions;
- how its targets will align spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions.
- how it will publish progress to achieving emissions reduction targets; and
- what contribution it has made to helping deliver Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme.

Sources and scale of carbon emissions in Moray

In 2020, Moray emitted around 788,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e). The main sources of carbon emissions in Moray are:

- **Industry and commercial:** This sector accounts for over a third of all emissions in Moray. The region's prominent whisky distilling industry and broader food and drink production heavily rely on electricity and natural gas. Additionally, energy intensive defence sites at Lossiemouth and Kinloss contribute to these emissions.
- **Agriculture:** Agriculture is the second largest source, responsible for approximately 32% of Moray's total emissions. In comparison, Scotland's agriculture emissions stand at 20%. This disparity reflects the scale of agricultural operations in Moray. Emissions originate from livestock, soils, operations, and the use of fertilisers and pesticides.
- **Domestic sector:** Domestic emissions are the third largest source of emissions, constituting 20% of the total emissions. Use of natural gas and electricity is significant, primarily due to the region's cold climate and the need for heating throughout several months of the year. Many properties in Moray are not connected to the gas grid and rely on kerosene and tanked gas for heating purposes.
- **Transport:** The rural nature of Moray leads to a high volume of vehicular traffic across the region, resulting in significant carbon emissions. Moray's rail network lacks electrification, and the absence of efficient rail freight handling facilities contributes to a high number of HGV journeys within and passing through the region.

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework shows that Moray produces 6.39tCO₂e emissions area wide within scope of LA per capita which ranks the area 32nd, lowest of all Local Authority areas.

Moray Council Climate Change Strategy

The Strategy is designed to provide a co-ordinated and appropriate response to help deal with the challenges that climate change is expected to bring. On the 27 June 2019, Moray Council declared a Climate Change Emergency. It was agreed that a Climate Change Strategy and action plan would be prepared and adopted with the aim of Moray Council becoming carbon neutral for direct emissions

by 2030. Further that the Council would work with the wider community to promote and facilitate local action on Climate Change.

The Moray Climate Action Network was founded and is hosted by tsiMoray and serves as a cross sector creative co-ordination group to deliver action to support a just and green recovery.

The Climate Change Plan and Routemap to Net Zero complements the strategy by providing an annual update on progress, actions and the way forward. The Routemap is reviewed regularly to inform future reviews and updates to the Strategy.

Adaptation

Likely Climate Risks

Adaptation Scotland highlights 15 key consequences from the Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (2014). Moray faces several climate risks including:

- **Increased temperatures:** Moray is already experiencing warmer winters and hotter summers. This trend is projected to persist, posing substantial implications for the region's environment and economy. For example, warmer winters could result in an upsurge in pests and diseases, while hotter summers intensify the occurrence of droughts and wildfires.
- **Changes in rainfall patterns:** Moray is expected to undergo shifts in rainfall patterns, potentially leading to more frequent flooding and droughts, as well as changes in the timing of the growing season.
- **Increase in sea levels:** As a coastal region, Moray is vulnerable to the consequences of rising sea levels which could result in further coastal flooding, erosion, and damage to infrastructure and property.
- **Higher frequency of extreme weather events:** The frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as storms, floods, and droughts has risen in recent years. If this trend persists as predicted, it could inflict further substantial damage to property, infrastructure, and even loss of life.

It is imperative for Moray to take measures now to reduce emissions and adapt to the broader consequences of climate change.

Climate Risks

- Because UK buildings were not generally designed for these extremes, there will be a greater risk to vulnerable people during events such as heatwaves or winter storms that cause power cuts. Storm Arwen saw people without power for up to two weeks. The elderly, young children, and those with underlying medical conditions or reduced mobility will be most affected. Milder, wetter winters may increase the health risks associated with damp and mould, similarly affecting already vulnerable people more.
- Of major concern is the threat to local food security linked to increased pests, disease, and damage to soil health and ecosystems, although the growing season may lengthen with warmer average temperatures. Global food supplies will likely be disrupted, and costs increase as other regions experience even more intense climate impacts than we do.
- There may be water shortages which would impact households as well as agriculture and locally important industries such as distilling which rely on large supplies of water during processing.

The Moray Climate Change Strategy, the Local Development Plan and the Regional Spatial Strategy present opportunities to combine work streams and projects to reduce costs of adapting to climate change. These opportunities include:

- Nature based solutions.
 - Riparian planting to reduce flood risk, restore biodiversity and sequester carbon.
 - Greening around buildings, to create shade, reduce heat, wind, surface water flooding, increase biodiversity and enhance wellbeing and mental health, and curriculum for excellence in outdoor learning in a school playground setting.
- Adapting buildings to cope with heatwaves and flood risk when making other planned upgrades.
 - Building design (solar gain, shade, ventilation), retrofitting, transport and connectivity (community hubs), local energy (islanding/ solar with battery relay), EV charging (air quality/ health improvement)
 - Location and siting of buildings and infrastructure – avoiding coastal/flood risk, flood protection, travel hubs, community hubs, brownfield development, soil management.

The issue of urban heat has been further highlighted in a report published by the UK Health Security Agency 2023 into the impacts on public health due to the warming climate, which suggests that 60,000 Europeans died in summer 2022 from heat related causes. The report projects that with a high emissions scenario, UK heat related deaths are estimated to increase by one and half times in the 2030's and by 12 times by 2070. The urban heat effect has been further highlighted at the local level in a paper published by George Gunn in 2023, which considered the urban heat island effect in Inverness. The study evidenced that more densely built- up urban areas returned the greatest urban heat island intensities, while conversely, areas of large urban greenspace were found to partially offset the effects, through cooling. Mr Gunn's study highlighted a need for spatial planning policy to reflect an awareness of urban heat within any size of settlement, with a focus on prevention. All of these reports highlight the important relationship between urban density, greenspace and human health which needs to be reflected and monitored through the Local development Plan.

Coastal Adaptation

A Regional Coastal Adaptation Plan (CCAP) and a first phase of five local plans were prepared in 2023 and a second phase of the remaining 11 is currently being progressed and will be reported to Council before summer 2024. The basis of the CCAP is to identify the risk and consequences of change to the coast.

Moray has been divided into 11 Local Plan Units along the coastline, with a Local Plan developed for each unit. Each Plan is further sub-divided into coastal management units (CMU's) which are created based on the type of material which makes up that section e.g. gravel/sands, Rock, Sea Defence, Vegetation. There is also the potential for a hybrid option for example if a rock armour section is present on a sandy beach. The Local Plans are:

1. Culbin
2. Findhorn
3. Roseisle
4. Burghead
5. Hopeman
6. Lossiemouth to Binn Hill
7. Kingston to Lower Auchenreath
8. Portgordon to Buckpool
9. Buckie to Portessie
10. Portknockie
11. Cullen to Muckle Hythe

Each CMU is allocated one of the following categories:

- No defence, no risk
- No defence, risk
- Defence, no risk
- Defence, risk
- Hybrid, no risk
- Hybrid, risk

The plans are developed in accordance with Moray Council's coastal erosion policy, NPF4, the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, the current Moray Local Development Plan, Dynamic Coast 2021 and Scottish Government Guidance on Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP).

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)

The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (Scotland) Order 2022 requires the council to develop plans to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in buildings across Moray, to support the transition to net zero.

The LHEES is a long-term strategic framework for:

- the improvement of the energy efficiency of buildings in the Moray area, and
- the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the heating of such buildings

The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Delivery Plan will set out how Moray Council proposes to support implementation of its LHEES. A draft of the Plan will be reported to Council in April 2024.

Moray's LHEES is primarily driven by Scotland's statutory targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction and fuel poverty:

- Net zero emissions by 2045 and 75% reduction by 2030.
- In 2040, as far as reasonably possible, no household in Scotland is in fuel poverty.

The strategy:

- sets out how each segment of the building stock needs to change to meet national and local objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.
- identifies strategic heat decarbonisation zones, and set out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone; and

Accompanying this strategy will be the Moray LHEES Delivery Plan, developed in partnership with key stakeholders, to provide a strong basis for action for Moray communities, the Scottish Government, investors, developers and wider stakeholders, pinpointing areas for targeted intervention and early, low-regrets measures.

Heat Networks

The Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021 introduced powers to regulate the heat networks market in Scotland for the first time. Section 92 sets statutory targets for heat supplied by heat networks. These require the combined supply of thermal energy by heat networks in Scotland to reach 2.6 TWh of output by 2027 and 6 TWh of output by 2030. The Heat Networks (Heat Network Zones and Building Assessment Reports) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 came into force on 30 May 2023 and require local authorities to identify, consult on and designate potential heat network zones in their areas.

Heat Network Zones are areas particularly suitable for heat network development. The purpose of zones is to attract investment from heat network developers. Currently as part of the LHEES process potential heat networks have been identified in Elgin, Forres and Buckie. Other towns have areas that

do not meet the criteria set out in LHEES as being suitable for a heat network but are being considered as locations of interest if they have industries with waste heat or are off gas grid.

Natural Capital

A natural capital assessment was undertaken in 2023 which identified the opportunities for natural capital investment in Moray.

Natural Capital is the environmental resources, habitats and ecosystems from which a flow of social, environmental and economic benefits to people can be generated. Natural capital includes: air, water, minerals, soil, coast, woodland, grassland, heathland and farmland. Investing in the quality and expansion of natural capital assets can therefore realise significant benefits for humans and help to tackle the twin crises for climate and nature.

The natural capital report identifies priority areas for improvements, however further work is required to determine land ownership, undertake site surveys and other detailed assessment as required. It is unlikely that any developer contributions would be sufficient to achieve natural capital investment at the scale required and a range of funding mechanisms will be required.

Investments should align with recommendations and maps arising from the Woodland and Forestry Strategy and Nature Network development, both of which are outlined in separate schedules.

Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUP)

RLUP's are being set up in Scotland to help achieve Scotland's climate change targets through land use change and a natural capital approach. These partnerships consist of local and national government, communities, landowners, land managers and a range of other stakeholders. Five RLUP pilots produced Regional Land use Frameworks using a natural capital approach which considers key natural assets and the benefits these provide to communities and the regional economy.

The 5 pilots in Scotland are:

- Cairngorms National Park
- Highland Council region
- Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
- North East Region (Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City)
- South of Scotland Region

Pilots were given the following specification regarding a natural capital approach:

- The pilots should adopt a broad natural capital approach, looking at our land as an asset that we need to protect and enhance so that it can continue to deliver a wide range of ecosystem service benefits such as food production, emissions reduction, carbon sequestration, climate adaptation, improved biodiversity and support for health and wellbeing through access to nature into the future.
- One element of this approach will be the identification of the potential for nature based solutions for climate change within the region such as woodland expansion, peatland restoration, natural flood management and greenspaces to reduce air pollution.

This approach isn't new and a number of partnerships exist across the UK with their aims differing slightly between each partnership, for example the Galloway Glens Landscape Partnership aim is to drive sustainable economic development by connecting people to their natural and human heritage. This approach can be explored through the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Plan to support delivery of a natural capital approach which could be funded through future applications to the Just Transition Fund and potentially through a new regional approach to Socio Economic benefit funding.

Evidence relating to Renewable Energy, Forestry and Woodland, Biodiversity, Nature Networks and Peatlands are covered in other schedules, but all relate and support the Council's Climate Change Strategy and a RLUP could play a key role in delivery.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Copies of the schedule were sent to the following organisations;

- Moray Climate Action Network
- Sustainable Scotland Network
- Adaptation Scotland

No statements of dispute were submitted.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- The Proposed Plan to recognise the pivotal role it has in tackling climate change
- The Proposed Plan will need to consider a policy approach to implement NPF4 and deliver carbon offsetting if required
- The Proposed Plan will need to consider an integrated approach to land use planning and management to support the move to net zero and adaptation to climate impacts, and the merits of a Regional Land Use Partnership. The Proposed Plan to reflect the spatial outcomes from the LHEES Strategy and to identify potential Heat Networks
- The Proposed Plan to consider how to mitigate the effects of urban heat and link this to related work on quality green spaces and nature networks.
- The Proposed Plan to reflect the spatial outcomes from the Natural Capital Report
- The Proposed Plan to reflect the spatial outcomes from community led net zero projects.
- The Proposed Plan to manage and mitigate wider impacts of climate change, including infrastructure risks, community resilience, air quality and food availability

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	2. Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended, section 15(5)(a) ‘the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district’
Links to Evidence	<p>CD015 Scotland Biodiversity Strategy and delivery plan 2045 Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland</p> <p>CD016 North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership 3 year Strategic Plan</p> <p>CD017 North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership habitat statements Foreword and Introduction</p> <p>CD018 North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership Habitat Statement – Wetlands Habitat Statement</p> <p>CD019 North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership Habitat Statement – Woodlands Habitat Statement</p> <p>CD020 North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership Habitat Statement – Marine and Coastal Statement</p> <p>CD021 North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership Habitat Statement – Grasslands Statement</p> <p>CD022 North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership Habitat Statement – Upland Heathland Statement</p> <p>CD023 North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership Habitat Statement – Built Environment</p> <p>CD024 Moray Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2021-23</p> <p>CD025 Moray Council Biodiversity Study</p> <p>CD026 Draft Moray Forestry and woodland Strategy 2024</p> <p>CD027 Moray Natural capital study</p> <p>CD028 Moray Local Development Plan 2020 Monitoring Report 2023</p> <p>CD029 Moray Open Space Strategy - Supplementary Guidance - 2018</p> <p>CD030 Moray Core Paths Plan 2023</p> <p>CD031 Moray Food Growth Strategy 2020</p> <p>CD032 Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023</p> <p>CD033 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – 2023</p> <p>CD034 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – Appendix</p> <p>CD035 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – Appendix LSS</p> <p>CD036 Moray Local Landscape Designation Review - 2018</p> <p>CD037 Moray Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Study – 2023</p> <p>CD038 Moray Council Planning and Regulatory Services Committee Meeting 19 December 2024 Planning Policy Guidance – Countryside Around Towns</p> <p>CD039 Framework for Nature Networks in Scotland – Draft</p> <p>CD040 Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking 2011</p> <p>CD041 Peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitats Guidance</p> <p>CD042 Moray Environmental Protected Areas Map</p> <p>Data Sets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention on Wetlands of International Importance: Ramsar sites

- [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended: Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#)
- [Special Protection Areas](#)
- [Special Areas Conservation](#)
- [Nature reserves](#)
- Moray wildlife sites
- National-Scale Land Capability for Agriculture [Prime Agricultural Land](#)
- Priority Marine Features - <https://opendata.nature.scot/maps/0e722e3e911e424f8dacac5a587c0dfb/about>
- Habitat Map of Scotland: <https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::habitat-map-of-scotland/explore>
- Scotland Land Cover Map 2022 - EUNIS Level 1: <https://opendata.nature.scot/maps/scotland-land-cover-map-2022-eunis-level-1/explore?location=57.570685%2C-4.968950%2C6.92>
- Scotland Land Cover Map 2022 - EUNIS Level 2: <https://opendata.nature.scot/maps/scotland-land-cover-map-2022-eunis-level-2/explore?location=57.570685%2C-4.968950%2C6.92>
- Scotland Land Cover Map – Change 2020-2022: <https://opendata.nature.scot/maps/scotland-land-cover-map-change-2020-2022/explore?location=57.570685%2C-4.968950%2C6.92>
- National Vegetation Classification (NVC): <https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::nvc-habitat-polygons/explore?location=57.758912%2C-4.979327%2C6.94>
- Geological Conservation Review: <https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/geological-conservation-review-sites/explore?location=52.187489%2C-6.472151%2C4.00>
- Peatland <https://opendata.nature.scot/search?groupIds=dc87e2f315c0452f8b2f2fbbfa0eabd4>
including Peatland Action Depth and Condition: <https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::peatland-action-peat-depth-and-condition/explore?location=57.684253%2C-4.102587%2C7.00>
- SSW – Soil Map: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/soil-maps/national-soil-map-of-scotland/>
- SEWeb – BGS Bedrock: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geoindex-onshore/>
- SEWeb – Superficial Layer: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geoindex-onshore/>

This schedule covers several policy areas related to biodiversity, natural places, landscape, and green and blue infrastructure. It is acknowledged that each policy area has individual representation in NPF4 and the current local development plan, however there are significant overlaps between all these policies, therefore the following takes a holistic approach to understand the wider issues.

NPF4 includes a number of spatial principles and policies to protect and enhance natural heritage and biodiversity. There is a strong emphasis on climate change and tackling the nature crisis, this includes supporting development that has a positive effect on nature networks and nature-based solutions. There is a requirement to ensure data, regarding the environment and specifically biodiversity, is comprehensive and up to date. This will ensure that planning decisions are based on robust evidence and decisions support the objectives on NPF4 and future Local Development Plans.

NPF4 includes a specific policy on Natural places (Policy 4 Natural Places) although it is recognised that several other policies will overlap. The policy aims to 'To protect, restore and enhance natural assets making best use of nature-based solutions.' This is further qualified by the policy outcomes 'Natural places are protected and restored' and 'Natural assets are managed in a sustainable way that maintains and grows their essential benefits and services'. NPF4 sets out that 'LDPs will identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally important natural assets, on land and along coasts. The spatial strategy should safeguard them and take into account the objectives and level of their protected status in allocating land for development. Spatial strategies should also better connect nature rich areas by establishing and growing nature networks to help protect and restore the biodiversity, ecosystems, and natural processes in their area'.

NPF4 (Policy 5 Soils) states that Local Development Plans should protect locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally valued soils, including land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use.

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) specifically states 'LDPs should consider using green belts, to support their spatial strategy as a settlement management tool to restrict development around towns and cities. Green belts will not be necessary for most settlements but may be zoned around settlements where there is a significant danger of unsustainable growth in car-based commuting or suburbanisation of the countryside. Greenbelts should be identified or reviewed as part of development of the Local Development Plan. There is a policy contained within NPF4, specifically in regard to Greenbelts. The current Moray Local Development Plan contains a specific policy on Countryside Around Towns (CAT's), this includes reference to spatial definition of the CATs within the LDP.

NPF4 includes a specific policy (Policy 20 Blue and Green Infrastructure) to protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure and their networks. Its outcome is to ensure blue and green infrastructure are an integral part of early design and development processes; are designed to deliver multiple functions including climate mitigation, nature restoration, biodiversity enhancement, flood prevention and water management and communities benefit from accessible, high-quality blue, green and civic spaces.

Green and blue infrastructure involves incorporating natural elements like parks, green spaces, and wildlife habitats to enhance biodiversity, mitigate climate change effects, and improve overall quality of life. In Moray, this involves policies to protect and expand existing green spaces, create new greenspace through development, and establish ecological corridors. The blue element focuses on water bodies, including rivers, lakes, and coastal areas. This might include measures to protect water quality, manage flood risks, and enhance recreational opportunities along rivers and coastal zones. Therefore, this evidence base will address several other policy areas outwith the scope of the schedule, however these will be referenced within.

Summary of Evidence

BIODIVERSITY and NATURAL PLACES

Scotland Biodiversity Strategy and delivery plan

The Scottish Government has recently published its Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 with a vision of a nature positive Scotland by 2030 and for biodiversity to be restored and regenerated by 2045. This document builds on the Biodiversity 2020 Challenge.

The Scottish Government has also committed to protect 30% of the land (and coastal and freshwaters) by 2030 (30x30), in line with the Global Biodiversity Framework. At present, across Scotland 18.2% of land and freshwater are protected.

NatureScot is currently involved in a variety of work streams to help progress the 30 by 30 network including development of the wider nature network. It is unclear at the stage the implications for Moray however the current programme of work being undertaken by Moray Council to develop the nature network will provide a foundation for this going forward. Funding options will also be explored as part of the LDP moving forward.

NESBIP 3-year strategic plan 2022-2025

The strategic plan sets out a number of objectives including delivery through collaboration, Information exchange, Awareness and positive action. Likewise, a number of strategic priorities have been agreed by the members (the member group comprises representatives of Local Authorities, statutory bodies, environmental charities, research institutes, landowners and environmental partnerships) – a number of these will be relevant to the development of the LDP. An action plan has been developed to deliver specific actions associated with the three objectives. A number of these actions will aid in improving biodiversity through the planning system. The actions presented within this report have aided in the development of the Moray Council biodiversity study and will continue to be used in the development of the nature network programme. Furthermore, actions are contained within the plan to aid decision making of planning applications through improved information exchange. Overall, the plan will improve planning within Moray through collaboration, information exchange and raising awareness of biodiversity.

NESBIP habitat statements

The North East Biodiversity Partnership has developed six broad habitat statements which give a summary of the habitats found in the area, information on habitat status and an outline of some of the species they support. The statements also illustrate the importance of each habitat group and opportunities to secure and enhance each habitat for the future.

These habitat statements build on the previous Local Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat and Species Plans and are intended to be used to identify important habitats and opportunities for enhancement. They will be used by local authorities to provide the local context for advice on biodiversity in relation to planning, design and development and by partner organisations to guide future action and priorities for biodiversity conservation and enhancement. The Habitat Statements include a large-scale map providing an overview of the distribution of each habitat.

The habitat statements should be used as an initial step when determining planning applications. These give a general indication of habitats and associated species; however, this does not negate the need for site specific survey and analysis. Moray Council is currently developing local planning guidance to aid development management in assessing planning applications, specifically in relation to biodiversity. It is envisaged that this guidance will signpost planners to the relevant information and guidance that is already available.

Moray Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2021-23

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 all public bodies in Scotland have a duty to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. In accordance with the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 public bodies must also publicly report its compliance with this biodiversity duty. This report outlines how the Moray Council has fulfilled its biodiversity duty over the period 2021 to 2023.

In relation to specific planning measures, the report highlights the current work streams that Moray Council are undertaking to protect and enhance biodiversity. All of this work is mentioned in detail throughout this and other schedules – specifically Schedules 1. Climate Change and 3. Forestry, Woodland & Trees.

Moray Council Biodiversity Study

Moray Council commissioned a detailed study to establish baseline evidence on the existing biodiversity of the area. The aim of this study is to provide data which Moray Council can utilise to develop the LDP 2027 in line with the biodiversity policies set out in NFP4. The study is split into several topics with the following objectives:

1. Priority Species and Habitats
2. Site Reviews
3. Biodiversity Enhancements Through the Planning System

The following data sources were used to inform the study:

- North East Biological Records Centre (NESBReC) for records of the following within the Moray Council Area:
 - Designated Species
 - North East Biodiversity Partnership (NESBiP) Locally Important Species
 - Additional Cairngorms Nature Priority Species
 - Invasive Non-native Plant Species
- Buglife’s Important Areas for Invertebrate
- NatureScot Open Data for protected sites:
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
 - Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)
 - Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)
- NatureScot Open Data for Habitats and Species:
 - Habitat Map of Scotland
 - Carbon and Peatland Map Scotland 2016
 - Wildcat Priority Areas
- Scottish Forestry Open Data for Native Woodland Survey of Scotland (NWSS).
- Scottish Government Spatial data for Land Capability for Agriculture.
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Wetland Inventory.
- Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) Reserve Boundaries.
- Joint Nature Conservancy Council (JNCC) for internationally important Annex I habitat descriptions.
- Scottish Biodiversity List for nationally important priority species and habitats.

In summary, there are a variety of statutory designated sites within the Moray LDP area which comprise of internationally important European designated sites (SACs and SPAs), nationally

important sites (SSSIs) and one locally important LNR. Sites which would currently meet the criteria of a 30x30 site (SSSI, SAC, SPA) cover 11,568 ha of land or c.6% of the total LDP area. Of these protected sites, 90.8ha are designated for geological features only with no conservation objectives relating to biodiversity.

In terms of protected species, the NESBReC data request returned 21,104 records of 390 species of protected or notable species which are of national or international importance within the Moray LDP area. There were also 2291 records for 190 locally important species.

In terms of Sites of Interest to Natural Science (SINS) sites, there are 36 historically designated SINS sites within the Moray LDP area. Two of these were designated for geological purposes with the rest being either solely designated for biological features or a mix of biological and geological. Beyond being biological or geological in nature, no information was available as to features the sites were originally designated for or what the status of those features might be now.

The report has amalgamated a range of information sources in regard to species locations, priority areas and hotspots across Moray. Furthermore, many of the designated sites are designated for the very reason to protect and enhance specific species.

There is potential for locally designated sites, given policy protection within the LDP such as SINS, to form part of future Nature Networks and to contribute towards the 30x30 sites as Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs). This may aid in giving greater protection to species and enhance opportunities for further increase in biodiversity.

LDPs must facilitate the creation of nature networks as a requirement of NFP4 Policy 3. As such, this review aimed to determine what features of biological importance are present within these sites currently and to provide recommendations as to their potential future value within the protected site network.

Moray Council Nature network

Following on from the biodiversity study, Moray Council commissioned a further study to develop the nature network. This study is currently being conducted to identify opportunity mapping for 'strands' to connect 30x30 sites, and connect urban-rural, as per the Nature Network Framework and guidance for local authorities, as well as any emerging guidance from Scottish Government/NatureScot.

The purpose of opportunity mapping "is not to dictate where the Nature Network will be, but to outline the options available, that can then be used as the basis for discussions with local communities, landowners and managers, and experts to decide where best the Nature Network can and should go, in line with local priorities for both climate and nature."

The output of the study will show preferred routes between statutory 30 x 30 sites and urban-rural routes, including details on habitat type, priority species and any other information agreed to be relevant. Clearly the outcome of this will have a direct impact on biodiversity opportunities across Moray.

This project is due for completion July 2024.

Moray Forestry and woodland Strategy

A separate schedule will detail the forestry, woodland, and trees evidence base for Moray – Schedule 3 Forestry, Woodland & Trees.

Moray Local Development Plan 2020- Monitoring report 2023

The current Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP2020) contains several policies that relate to biodiversity, either directly or indirectly. The direct planning policies relate to placemaking, protected sites and biodiversity. However, a number of other policy areas contain elements that relate to wider

biodiversity. The MLDP has been adopted for a number of years and the relevant policies have been tested through the submission of planning applications.

The significant change since the adoption of the current LDP is the adoption of NPF4 in February 2023. This is now part of the Development Plan and there is significant focus on the climate and nature crisis. The Spatial Principles, specifically Sustainable Places highlights the importance of the environment and addressing a number of these issues. Furthermore, this strategy highlights a number of cross cutting policy themes that will require to be addressed in order to improve biodiversity.

Therefore, the adoption of NPF4 has highlighted and further emphasised the need to deliver biodiversity improvements through the planning system. The existing local development plan and the policy contained within NPF4 put further emphasis on delivering and improving biodiversity through the development plan. NPF4 has been adopted for a number of months and the policy considerations are filtering through planning decisions that are now being made. Although there are not any direct contradictions between the biodiversity policies contained within NPF 4 and the local development plan there is clearly an increased recognition and importance on the need to deliver improved biodiversity.

A number of themes have emerged from the monitoring report that are directly relevant to the development plan.

The current local development plan requires that biodiversity plans are submitted for proposals of 10 or more houses under policy DP1. The plans submitted as part of the planning application are often a mix of a landscape plan and biodiversity plan combined with some suggestions for biodiversity improvements. The majority of the time this includes tree/shrub planting, bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog highways. However, it is common that these plans are generic and not site specific therefore it is not always clear if these suggestions are relevant to the specific site. Moray Council is currently preparing local guidance directly related to improving biodiversity across the built environment. This should help developers in preparing site specific biodiversity plans which will meet the policy requirements set out in the development plan.

The existing planning policies within the LDP and within NPF4 provide sufficient protection for existing sites. This approach appears to be working successfully as there is minimal impact on the existing protected sites. Appropriate assessment as required through HRA regulations have been undertaken on a small number of occasions.

There has been a significant amount of planning applications that have considered protected species, however a high percentage of these are specifically in relation to bats. These have been supported by bat surveys and the proper procedure through mitigation and the licencing procedure. However, there are some occasions that species/habitat assessment is not undertaken to an appropriate standard.

There have been a small number of planning applications that have been refused due to species concerns although in all cases this was not the primary reason for refusal.

As noted, the Development Plan has raised the importance of biodiversity and acknowledged the role of the planning system in delivering this. The Development Plan has several mechanisms to ensure biodiversity is improved across all scales of development. Local planning guidance should ensure that applicants and developers are fully aware of the need to incorporate specific biodiversity improvements within their sites. The policy position on biodiversity improvements is clear, however the action and implementation of this needs to be reflected in planning decisions.

Designations

The following provides details on the designated site types currently protected within Moray:

Ramsar sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention to promote their conservation and sustainable use. Moray currently has two RAMSAR sites, Moray and Nairn Coast and Loch Spynie, totalling 2414ha.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Moray hosts thirty-five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), covering diverse and ecologically significant landscapes. SSSIs are designated to protect and conserve areas with unique flora, fauna, and geological features. Moray's SSSIs include coastal habitats, wetlands, woodlands, contributing to regional biodiversity. These designations signify the importance of preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the region. Local management and operational plans are associated with each individual site. Further details are contained within the NatureScot Sitelink.

SPA

Four Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are contained within Moray, as listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. SPAs are crucial for the conservation of rare and vulnerable bird species and their habitats. Moray's SPAs encompass coastal areas, woodland, and other ecosystems that support avian biodiversity. These designations aim to safeguard habitats and ensure the protection of breeding, feeding, and resting sites for various bird species. Total area 4328ha.

SAC

Moray has four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive, these are Creag nan Gamhainn SAC, Culbin Bar SAC, Lower Findhorn Woods SAC and Lower River Spey - Spey Bay SAC. There is also the Moray Firth SAC. SACs are designated to protect habitats and species of European importance. In Moray, these areas include diverse ecosystems like woodlands, wetlands, and coastal regions that support unique flora and fauna. The designation aims to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of these habitats.

Local nature reserves

Findhorn Bay Local Nature Reserve is a coastal site designated to protect its diverse birds and flora. The area is also covered by other designations, as noted above— total size 1200ha.

All of the above datasets are available from NatureScot Sitelink and Moray GIS datasets.

Local nature sites

There are several wildlife sites across Moray that play an important role but are not protected by relevant legislation. However, they have some protection through the current local development plan. These will be considered as part of the wider nature network study.

Overall, there are a number of fixed reference points in terms of biodiversity and the wider environment including designated sites, protected soils, local nature reserves etc. Many of these policy areas have protection through other legislation or policies contained within the development plan. This is further supported by guidance from Scottish Government and statutory bodies. The main implication for the LDP is the need to develop improved biodiversity including the requirement for nature networks. The emphasis on enhanced biodiversity will have implications for development proposals with a requirement for improved biodiversity solutions.

Peatland, carbon-rich soils and priority peatland habitats

Naturescot has recognised that the National Planning Framework 4 states that significant weight should be given to address both the global climate and nature crises when considering all development proposals (Policy 1). Proposals must also protect, conserve, restore and enhance

biodiversity (Policy 3). In addition, the intent of Policy 5 is to protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise disturbance to soils from development.

The guidance and associated carbon and peatland 2016 map show the distribution of carbon and peatland classes across the whole of Scotland. It gives a value to indicate the likely presence of carbon-rich soils, deep peat, and priority peatland habitat for each individually mapped area, at a large scale. The dataset contains carbon and peatland class values, as well as over 439,000 records providing detail on the main soil types and habitat characteristics associated with each area mapped.

The map is a high-level planning tool created to promote consistency and clarity in the preparation of spatial frameworks by planning authorities. The map is a predictive tool which provides an indication of the likely presence of peat on each individually mapped area, at a large scale. The types of peat shown on the map are carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat. While this tool is helpful to establish the likely presence of peat on a site, any development proposals must satisfy the policy requirements through site specific investigations.

Prime Agricultural Land

Land capability for agriculture provides information on the types of crops that may be grown in different areas dependent on environmental and soil characteristics. Soil classes range from Class 1 (land capable of producing a wide range of crops) to Class 7 (land of very little agricultural value). Land within Class 3 is subdivided to provide further information on potential yields; Classes 4 and 5 are further divided to provide information on grasslands; Class 6 is divided on the quality of the natural vegetation for grazing.

This information has an implication for the spatial strategy and policy content on sensitive soil sites, namely sites that contain Prime Agricultural Land (PAL). Information and the approach to identifying locally and culturally important soils will be considered as part of the development of the forthcoming LDP.

LANDSCAPE

Moray Local Landscape Designation Review 2018 and Local Development Plan 2020 Monitoring Report 2023

In 2018, Moray Council conducted a blank canvas review of all landscapes across Moray including existing landscape designations. The review identified 13 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), which was reflected in the MLDP 2020, aimed at protecting and enhancing the special character and qualities of Moray's most valued landscapes as well as promoting a greater understanding of them.

MLDP2020 Policy EP3 supported these designations with a tailored approach to ensure that development did not prejudice the special qualities of the designated landscapes. The policy also specified acceptable uses based on urban and rural areas within the designated landscape. The Monitoring Report 2023 demonstrates that the policy is having a positive effect on development in the valued landscapes. A total of 19 applications (8 in 2021/22 and 11 in 2022/23) were refused on the grounds that development would have an adverse impact on the landscape/special qualities or did not reflect the traditional settlement character. In rural areas, there is a requirement for proposals to be of specified uses. In 2021/22, no applications were refused due to the proposed use, although 2 developments (nursery and quarry extension) were deemed to be acceptable departures from MLDP Policy EP3 as they would not impact on the special qualities. In 2022/23, 3 applications were refused due to non-confirming uses that would impact on the special qualities of the area. Two applications were approved as an acceptable departure on the basis that the uses were for the enhancement of digital infrastructure or would supersede an extant consent resulting in a lower impact.

There will be a requirement for a tailored landscape approach in Moray due to unique circumstances regarding rural development and energy development, it is likely this will take the form of a local policy within the LDP.

Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework

The Keith and Blackhillock areas are coming under increasing development pressure, on a piecemeal basis, from development that supports the National Grid and there is no forward planning to identify necessary infrastructure or development potential, which undermines the plan-led system advocated by the Government.

With national developments promoted in National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), including Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure, a development framework has been developed for the Keith and Blackhillock areas in order to make best use of surrounding land and appropriately control the opportunities arising from renewables associated with the grid infrastructure and energy systems/storage. Based on a landscape sensitivity assessment, the Framework identifies potential development sites for a range of uses and associated landscape mitigation required.

Moray Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Study 2023

Moray Council has experienced significant pressure for onshore wind farms over the last 20 plus years. Two areas of significant cumulative impact have been created at Dallas/ Knockando Moor and Cabrach which have resulted in significant adverse landscape impacts. Moray Council has objected to a number of large-scale wind farms, however despite having up to date local policy guidance and landscape capacity studies/ landscape sensitivity studies, proposals have continued to be consented, despite being contrary to local development plan policy.

The Moray Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Study (LSS) 2023 accords with the NatureScot methodology set out in their Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance 2022. The LSS considers broad landscape and visual sensitivities, identifying constraints and opportunities at a strategic scale. The sensitivity assessments have been undertaken on the basis of Assessment Units (page 18/Figure 3) which are closely allied to Landscape Character types. The study considers the sensitivity of Assessment Units to a limited number of pre-determined turbine types, principally based on height, individual applications need to be considered on a case-by-case basis with some flexibility on turbine heights being applied within close range of the upper height threshold used in the sensitivity assessment. The LSS and implications for the Proposed Plan are analysed in more detail in Schedule 5- Energy.

Countryside Around Towns

Countryside Around Towns's (CAT's) are designated in MLDP 2020 where there is highest development pressure and aim to prevent development sprawl into the countryside. A review by Moray Council is currently ongoing to review all the Countryside Around Town designations within the local authority area. This will assess the current Countryside Around Towns (CAT's) designations for five settlements within Moray, namely Elgin, Forres, Keith, Buckie, and Lossiemouth. This will include assessing the purpose of the individual CAT designations and ensuring they are fit for purpose and provide a robust decision-making framework. The need for any additional CAT's will also be considered.

The outcome of the review will suggest any required changes to the CAT boundaries, including removal of existing ones and recommendations for any new CAT designations. The review will consider any policy updates, development pressures, changing land use priorities, environmental priorities and include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the current CAT.

The main outcome of the review is to provide an up-to-date assessment of the current CAT designation and ensures that it continues to deliver a balance between development needs and the protection of the area around pressurised settlements.

Following the publication of NPF4 and the need for clarity between NPF4 Policy 8 Greenbelts and Moray LDP Policy EP4 Countryside Around Town a policy position was agreed by Moray Council (Moray Council Planning and Regulatory Services Committee 19 December 2024).

The committee agreed (19.12.2024) with the policy position regarding the difference between the Countryside Around Towns and Greenbelt designations and that the LDP policy EP4 CAT will prevail in determining planning applications. Therefore, going forward and in reference to the forthcoming LDP, it is expected that the local policy on CAT's will continue.

GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

Open Space Strategy

The Moray Open Space Strategy (OSS) 2018 is a plan developed by Moray Council to guide the protection, management, and enhancement of open spaces within Moray. Open spaces encompass a variety of areas, including parks, recreational areas, and natural landscapes. This strategy is designed to balance the protection of natural environments with the need for recreation, community engagement, and sustainable development.

The current OSS sets out eight objections and associated actions to deliver the overall vision.

The objectives are:

1. To ensure public open spaces provide a diversity of functions, including ecological, cultural, visual, and sport and recreation.
2. To ensure public open spaces in Moray are of sufficient quality and distribution to meet the needs of local communities and local biodiversity.
3. To address the importance of accessibility and walkability to public open space.
4. To promote safe use and enjoyment of open space through appropriate siting and design.
5. To establish a framework and standards to allow consistent decision making for the ongoing development and management of public open space.
6. To encourage community involvement in improving and managing open space.
7. To protect public open space and proposed open spaces from inappropriate development.
8. Avoid fragmentation of existing open spaces and encourage creation of green network.

The strategy sets out open space standards and guidelines to ensure there are qualitative and quantitative factors to assess. The strategy then provides a summary of the open space audit, with open spaces categorised across a range of environments, including scores for quality, quantity, and accessibility. The associated appendices provide information on individual settlements.

Overall, the Moray Open Space Strategy, with its holistic approach, aims to strike a balance between development and the conservation of natural environments. It plays a crucial role in promoting the well-being of residents, promoting community cohesion, and contributing to the overall quality of life in the region.

An updated Moray Open Space Strategy is currently being prepared with audit field work completed and the Strategy will inform the forthcoming Local Development Plan. This will highlight any gaps in provision and how this can be addressed through other work streams, including the play sufficiency assessment, nature networks and any links with development through developer obligations.

This will allow NPF4 to be considered and provide updates on specific settlements and sites. It is envisaged that it will follow a similar approach to the current open space strategy.

The open space strategy will feed into the local living methodology through appropriate and sufficient provision of open space and associated play spaces.

Core Paths Plan

The Core Path Plan outlines a network of paths and routes that connect communities, natural landmarks, and recreational areas. This plan aims to enhance accessibility, promote outdoor activities, and contribute to the well-being of residents. Furthermore, the Core Path Plan provides opportunities for additional green infrastructure and wider linkages.

An amended core path plan has recently been reviewed by Moray Council and updates information originally contained within the LDP 2011.

The Moray Core Path Plan should allow for the further develop of green infrastructure by incorporating natural corridors and green spaces into the network of paths and routes. This integrated approach not only facilitates movement but also promotes the conservation of biodiversity, cultural heritage, and scenic landscapes. By fostering a balance between development and nature, the core paths provide an opportunity to further develop green networks. Furthermore, the protections afforded to the core path network ensure that this infrastructure is safeguarded from inappropriate development.

The core path plan is currently being considered as part of the Moray Nature Networks study. The Moray Core Path Plan is a wide-ranging document that will have spatial implications across policies within the LDP. The core path plan contains a number of routes that will help to deliver policy outcomes contained within the local development plan. It is acknowledged that there will be gaps in this provision and that delivery mechanisms will be explored to fill these gaps. This may require coordinated working with community groups and other organisations. This will be reflected in the LDP delivery programme.

Food Growing Strategy

The Moray Food Growing Strategy is a plan designed to promote sustainable food production within the Moray region. This strategy recognises the importance of promoting a sustainable and diverse food supply while addressing environmental, economic, and social considerations of locally produced food. The strategy is supplementary guidance supporting the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 and a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for growing spaces.

At its core, the strategy aims to encourage and provide opportunities for communities to grow their own food. There is a spatial strategy contained within to show existing and potential food growing opportunities within specific settlements within Moray.

The protection afforded to food growing areas and the opportunities presented within the strategy add to the green network and demonstrates a different element of green infrastructure.

By embracing a rounded approach to food production, the Moray Food Growing Strategy contributes and provides opportunities to building a resilient and sustainable local food system, enhancing the well-being of both the community and the environment.

The strategy clearly shows the benefits of providing food growing space within settlements. There is a clear need to embed food growing opportunities within developments and ensure these are accessible and inclusive spaces. Therefore, there will be a requirement to provide food growing spaces in larger developments as part of open space requirement. There may need to be a tailored approach within Moray or a local policy to ensure these spaces come forward in an appropriate manner.

Play sufficiency Audit

The Moray Play Sufficiency Assessment is an assessment conducted to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of play opportunities and environments for children and young people within the Moray region. The term "play sufficiency" refers to the idea that children have a right to sufficient and varied opportunities for play as an essential component of their development and well-being.

The audit involves an assessment of existing play spaces and facilities, to determine whether they meet the needs of children and young people and promotes an accessible, play-friendly environment. This process includes gathering input from children themselves, parents, and community members to understand their perspectives on play and identify any gaps or deficiencies in the current provision.

The key components of the Play Sufficiency Audit include:

1. **Assessment of Play Spaces:** Evaluate the quality and accessibility of existing play areas, parks, and recreational facilities.
2. **Community Engagement:** Seek input from children, parents, and the community to understand their preferences, concerns, and suggestions regarding play opportunities.
3. **Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Work within local authorities, schools, and community groups to ensure a coordinated and collaborative approach to enhancing play opportunities.
4. **Identification of Barriers:** Identify any barriers or challenges that may hinder children's access to safe and enjoyable play experiences.

The Moray Play Sufficiency Audit aims to provide an understanding of the current status of play facilities with Moray. The findings will inform future planning and policy decisions to create a more play-friendly community. This evidence contained within the audit will feed into the Local Living methodology -Schedule 7 Local Living.

Flooding and Water Management

A separate schedule will contain information on flooding and wider blue infrastructure issues – Schedule 11. It is also acknowledged that blue infrastructure is a key element of placemaking and that this will be considered as part of the place making schedule – Schedule 6 Placemaking.

Moray Council Supplementary Guidance - Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment for New Developments is currently being updated.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Over the past year stakeholder engagement has been ongoing specifically in relation to gathering information on biodiversity and natural spaces. This approach was adopted to reach out to a number of stakeholders and local interest groups to ensure a robust evidence base was established for development of the evidence report.

Prior to the development of the biodiversity study several online workshops were hosted to understand the requirements of what information was needed. The following stakeholders were involved; Naturescot, Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry, Woodland Trust and RSPB. Furthermore, engagement has taken place with neighbouring Planning Authorities and internal within the wider planning team.

During the development of the biodiversity study a number of other stakeholders and local interest groups were engaged and supplied information to inform this study. Details are included with the biodiversity study.

Work is continuing on the development of the Moray Nature Network which continues to engage a number of stakeholders. A core group is currently being set up to support the development of the Nature Network and will allow continued engagement and involvement.

The information received through this engagement exercise, and the continuation of this has enabled a wide range of views to be incorporated into the ongoing process of gathering evidence. A number of other, more general engagement exercises have taken place over the past year, for example public events and school workshops. Any information submitted, related to biodiversity will be analysed as part of the process.

This core group will continue to be involved in the further development of the nature network process.

As detailed above, engagement has been conducted on the Play Sufficient Assessment, throughout the process.

Many of the strategies named above, have engaged stakeholders as part of the development of the strategy.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

Biodiversity and Natural Places

- The emphasis on biodiversity enhancement will impact on development proposals; this should be included in site selection criteria.
- Improved biodiversity plans need to be site specific. Local planning guidance is currently being developed to aid developers in producing biodiversity plans that are appropriate for their sites.
- Biodiversity plans need to be deliverable and monitored – a policy mechanism will be required to ensure this happens in perpetuity. Long term management plans should be included within development proposals.
- Development of a Nature network, including the requirement for 30 x 30 for biodiversity improvement will impact on land use designations.
- In some cases, the need to offset biodiversity enhancement may require designation and a policy mechanism to deliver this.
- Biodiversity improvements will also be delivered through other policy and strategy mechanisms i.e. Forestry and Woodland Strategy, Open Space Strategy etc.
- Development of the Nature network, including the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure will impact on land use, existing policy & legislation.
- Designated sites i.e. RAMSAR, SSSIs etc. will continue to direct development to the most appropriate places. The review of existing SINS may have implications for land use and policy requirements.
- The increased emphasis on protection of soils will impact on development proposals and should be considered as part of the site selection process.

Landscape

- Any changes to the Countryside Around Towns designations will require an update to the spatial strategy and policy – with the need for a local policy to reflect the local circumstances.
- The Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework should be reflected in the Regional Spatial Strategy and Proposed Plan.
- The outcomes of the Moray Local Landscape Designation Review (currently referred to as Special Landscape Areas) should be reflected in the Proposed Plan as local landscape designations.
- Prepare a tailored approach to support local landscape designations by taking account of existing evidence, local knowledge/experience, and specific characteristics of Moray.

- Approach must recognise Moray’s primary indigenous industries and their needs, including developing a definition of Moray’s indigenous industries.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- The updated OSS will create new spatial opportunities and add to the nature network.
- The Food Growing Strategy has highlighted a number of potential food growing sites, these should be incorporated into the next LDP and/or place plan.
- The play sufficiency audit will provide information on existing play facilities and informal play spaces – this may have an impact on the spatial strategy and policy/site requirements of the next LDP.
- All of the above will impact on site selection criteria.

Statements of Agreement

NatureScot

NatureScot has agreed with the sufficiency of the evidence but has suggested some additional evidence sources to complement the existing schedule. It is suggested the 24 additional datasets, and two additional evidence sources are included. Furthermore, additional protected areas should be included, specifically cross-border sites and marine protected areas. It is suggested a list of challenges is included to match the forestry woodland and trees schedule. Finally, it is suggested that further evidence should be included on earth sciences/Geodiversity.

Moray Council Response - To ensure a proportionate approach within the Evidence Report Moray Council examined the suggested additional evidence datasets and sources. The following evidence sources will be added to the evidence report - any suggested evidence sources that are not proportionate or are covered by other evidence sources have not been included.

The following data sets will be added to the Evidence Report

- Priority Marine Features - <https://opendata.nature.scot/maps/0e722e3e911e424f8dacac5a587c0dfb/about>
- Habitat Map of Scotland: <https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::habitat-map-of-scotland/explore>
- Scotland Land Cover Map 2022 - EUNIS Level 1: <https://opendata.nature.scot/maps/scotland-land-cover-map-2022-eunis-level-1/explore?location=57.570685%2C-4.968950%2C6.92>
- Scotland Land Cover Map 2022 - EUNIS Level 2: <https://opendata.nature.scot/maps/scotland-land-cover-map-2022-eunis-level-2/explore?location=57.570685%2C-4.968950%2C6.92>
- Scotland Land Cover Map – Change 2020-2022: <https://opendata.nature.scot/maps/scotland-land-cover-map-change-2020-2022/explore?location=57.570685%2C-4.968950%2C6.92>
- National Vegetation Classification (NVC): <https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::nvc-habitat-polygons/explore?location=57.758912%2C-4.979327%2C6.94>
- GCRs: <https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/geological-conservation-review-sites/explore?location=52.187489%2C-6.472151%2C4.00>
- Peatland <https://opendata.nature.scot/search?groupIds=dc87e2f315c0452f8b2f2fbbfa0eabd4>
<https://opendata.nature.scot/search?groupIds=dc87e2f315c0452f8b2f2fbbfa0eabd4>
[including Peatland Action Depth and Condition:](https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::peatland-action-peat-depth-andcondition/)
<https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::peatland-action-peat-depth-andcondition/>
[explore?location=57.684253%2C-4.102587%2C7.00](https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::peatland-action-peat-depth-andcondition/)

- SSW – Soil Map: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/soil-maps/national-soil-map-ofscotland/>
- SEWeb – BGS Bedrock: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geoindex-onshore/>
- SEWeb – Superficial Layer: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geoindex-onshore/>
- National-Scale Land Capability for Agriculture: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/capability-maps/national-scale-land-capability-foragriculture/>
- Framework for Nature Networks in Scotland – Draft (<https://www.nature.scot/doc/framework-nature-networks-scotland-draft>) plus outcomes from Nature Networks pilot.
- Scottish Government’s ‘Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking’ (2011): <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-andguidance/2011/11/green-infrastructure-design-placemaking/documents/0122541-pdf/0122541-pdf/govscot:document/0122541.pdf>

The following data sets were not considered proportionate and have not been included in the Evidence Report.

- UK Lakes Portal - <https://eip.ceh.ac.uk/apps/lakes>
- Dynamic Coast - <https://www.dynamiccoast.com/>
- Saltmarsh Survey of Scotland: <https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::saltmarsh-surveyof-scotland/explore>
- Wildcat Priority Areas: <https://opendata.nature.scot/datasets/snh::wildcat-priorityareas/explore?location=54.297367%2C-6.472151%2C5.00>
- HES – Canmore (cultural soils):<https://canmore.org.uk/site/search/result?SITETYPE=500476&SITEDISCIPLINE=1&SITE COUNTRY=1&COUNCIL>
- Soil sealing: [https://www.nature.scot/doc/scotlands-indicators-soilsealing#:~:text=Description%20of%20current%20indicator%20status,unitary%20authorit y%20\(%3C0.10%25\)](https://www.nature.scot/doc/scotlands-indicators-soilsealing#:~:text=Description%20of%20current%20indicator%20status,unitary%20authorit y%20(%3C0.10%25))
- Map of subsoil compaction risk: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/risk-maps/map-ofsubsoil-compaction-risk-partial-cover/>
- Map of soil erosion risk: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/risk-maps/map-of-soilerosion-risk-partial-cover/>
- Map of soil leaching potential: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/risk-maps/map-ofsoil-leaching-potential-partial-cover/>
- Map of runoff risk: <https://soils.environment.gov.scot/maps/risk-maps/map-of-runoff-riskpartial->
- Nitrate Vulnerable Zone: <https://www.spatialdata.gov.scot/geonetwork/srv/eng/catalog.search#/metadata/0bcbd0ce-05e7-4ea3-9cd9-3699cb7a5894>

To address the issue of the protected areas a map will be included within the evidence report to show all the protected areas within Moray, including cross boundary areas and marine protected areas.

The schedule will be updated to highlight specific challenges related to the topics contained within this report.

As noted, some additional datasets will be included that directly address earth sciences/Geodiversity issues.

SEPA

SEPA has agreed with the sufficiency of the evidence but has suggested some additional evidence sources to complement the existing schedule. It has been specifically suggested that further evidence is included to support Policy 20 of NPF4 – Blue and Green Infrastructure. It is noted that a list of evidence sources has been included within *SEPA- Evidence sources by MOF4 policy topics Version 2 November 2023*.

Moray Council Response- Moray Council accepts the suggestions put forward by SEPA in regard to Policy 20 NPF4, specifically in relation to blue infrastructure. However, it is acknowledged within the schedule that many of the policies mentioned are cross cutting and to avoid repetition and ensure proportionality not all the suggested evidence sources will be added to this schedule. For example, a number of these evidence sources relate specifically to flooding and it would be more appropriate to include these within other schedules. As noted in this schedule blue and green infrastructure can provide multiple benefits including many of the topics covered in this schedule. Many of the evidence sources already highlighted will contain information to support policy 20 blue and green infrastructure, for example the Open Space Strategy, Nature Networks Study, and the Biodiversity Strategy etc.

Following consideration of the SEPA document and to be proportional and avoid repetition with other schedules there is no additional evidence sources contained within the afore mentioned document that should be brought forward into this schedule.

Statements of Dispute
None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	3. Forestry, woodland and trees
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 15(5)- the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.
Links to Evidence	<p>CD043 Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2018 CD026 Draft Moray Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2024 CD044 Scotland’s Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 CD045 Moray Planning Policy Guidance - MLDP CD046 Register of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) CD047 ‘Review of Tree Preservation Orders’ – Report to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 20 December 2022 CD028 Moray Local Development Plan 2020 Monitoring Report 2023</p> <p>Datasets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIS datasets for woodland cover, preferred, potential planting areas- data held by Moray Council relating to Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2018 National Forest Inventory 2020 dataset produced by Forest Research with regular updates https://data-forestry.opendata.arcgis.com/search?tags=Scotland Native Woodland Survey of Scotland- produced by Forest Research, 2015- https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=6d27b064fcb471da50c8772ad0162d7 Scottish Ancient Woodland Inventory- data managed by Naturescot https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/c2f57ed9-5601-4864-af5f-a6e73e977f54/ancient-woodland-inventory-scotland Scottish Forestry Open Data (arcgis.com): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Plans and Felling;</i> <i>Forestry Grant Scheme Options and Claims</i> Riparian woodland https://opendata.nature.scot/maps/ae0e62851e614ad39f52d38440b9a9a8/about <p>-</p>
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context	
<p>NPF4 requires Local Development Plans to identify and protect existing woodland and the potential for its enhancement or expansion to avoid habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity, helping to support and expand nature networks.</p> <p>The spatial strategy should identify and set out proposals for forestry, woodlands and trees in the area, including their development, protection and enhancement, resilience to climate change, and the expansion of a range of types to provide multiple benefits. This will be supported and informed by an up-to-date Forestry and Woodland Strategy.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Scotland’s Forestry Strategy 2019-2019</p> <p>The vision in the Strategy document is;</p>	

“In 2070, Scotland will have more forests and woodlands, sustainably managed and better integrated with other land uses. These will provide a more resilient, adaptable resource, with greater natural capital value, that supports a strong economy, a thriving environment, and healthy and flourishing communities.”

The Strategy aims to increase forest and woodland cover to 21% of the total area of Scotland by 2032 and to increase the use of Scottish wood products in construction from 2.2 million m³ in 2018 to 3 million m³ by 2031/32.

While the Local Development Plan and Regional Spatial Strategy must reflect this land cover and opportunities to support the national targets for woodland expansion, this has to be balanced with other land uses and amenity considerations.

Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2018

The Strategy was published by Moray Council in January 2018, recognising the importance of Moray’s forests for economic, social and environmental benefits. Moray has approximately 34% of its land covered in forests and woodlands, compared with the national average of 19% in Scotland and the strategy identifies the key issues affecting forestry and woodlands in Moray and seeks to promote the opportunities that exist across the sector to support and enable them to develop. It also seeks to guide woodland creation to appropriate locations across Moray over the next 20 years and is used by Scottish Forestry to assist in assessing applications for forestry grants.

Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2024

To inform the new Local Development and the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Scottish Forestry jointly commissioned a new Woodland and Forestry Strategy, and a draft will be consulted on in Spring/ Summer 2024. The draft Strategy recognises that woodlands and forests in Moray form part of a mature and well-developed economic forestry sector with a range of related businesses spanning from tree nurseries, harvesting, transportation and sawmilling. Forestry forms a key part of Moray’s economy generating £39 million annually and providing direct employment for almost 1000 people based on data from BRES.

The purpose of the draft Strategy (p3) is to help deliver Scotland’s transition to a net zero future and the Scottish Government commitments on:

- Sustainable development and economic growth
- Mitigating the global climate emergency
- Reversing biodiversity loss
- Increasing community health and well-being

The Strategy, when approved, will principally be use by landowners and managers, Scottish Forestry, Moray Council, and stakeholders when considering woodland creation schemes, felling applications and Long- Term Forest Plans. The Strategy has taken account of the Woodland Forestry Strategies in place in adjacent local authorities which are not individually references in this schedule.

Woodlands in Moray comprise a diverse mix of productive and native woodlands which make a strong contribution to biodiversity and to the distinctiveness of the landscape.

Table 1 Broad species composition

Woodland Type	Area	%
Predominantly conifer	51,649	81
Predominantly broadleaved	10,628	17
Mixed conifer and broadleaved	1,327	2
Total hectares	63,604	100

Forestry and Land Scotland own 37% (23,418ha) of woodlands and forests in Moray with the remainder in private/ community ownership.

The Strategy estimates that 990 people are employed in forestry related business activities in 95 businesses. 80 are micro sized businesses with up to 9 staff, 10 are small businesses with up to 49 staff and 5 are medium sized businesses with up to 250 staff. Moray is home to nationally important tree nurseries, including Christies (Fochabers) which forecast sales for the year ended August 2023 are estimated to be more than 25 million trees rising to 30 million trees per annum over the next 3 years. Newton nursery is run by Forestry and Land Scotland and provides 7 million of the 24 million trees required annually by FLS for woodland expansion and restocking.

The majority of Moray's woodland and forests accommodate tracks and paths for cycling, walking, horse riding and are used to host regional, national and international events such as orienteering. Long distance trails run through the woodlands and forests including the Dava Way, Moray Coast Trail and Speyside Way. The Moray Way is a popular route which combines these three trails and provides links into Highland, Aberdeenshire, and the Cairngorms National Park.

Moray's woodland and forests provide a wealth of environmental benefits, hosting numerous protected animal species such as red squirrel, black grouse, pine marten, bats, wildcat, goshawk, and the Scottish wood ant. Invasive non-native species such as rhododendron, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are also present in some of Moray's woodlands and riparian corridors, which can outcompete more diverse flora and result in reduced biodiversity.

Planted productive forests dominate the woodland cover in Moray, comprising extensive areas of Scots Pine with many managed under continuous cover systems which increase age diversity of the trees and allow ground flora to develop. Semi natural woodland is scattered throughout the region, found in small patches, most often associated with riparian corridors and fragmented stands in agricultural landscapes and upland areas. Priority woodland habitats in the area include Upland Birch, Upland Oak, Upland Mixed Ash, Lowland Mixed deciduous and Wet Woodlands. Increasing the cover of semi natural woodlands is challenged by high levels of deer and livestock browsing, reducing the success of natural regeneration.

Many of the woodlands are present in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, which are areas which have been under continuous forestry cover since 1750. These have a rich and diverse soil biota and other associated flora and fauna. Many of Moray's woodlands are considered to be of national and international importance for their biodiversity value with the following designations in place.

Ramsar sites:

- Loch Spynie
- Moray and Nairn Coast

Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

- Bochel Woodland
- Buinach and Glenlatterach
- Burn of Ballintomb
- Cairngorms
- Creag nan Gamhainn
- Culbin Sands, Forest and Findhorn Bay
- Den of Pitlurg
- Eastern Cairngorms
- Kellas Oakwood
- Loch Spynie
- Lower Findhorn Woods
- Lower River Spey
- Lower Strathavon Woodlands

- Mill Wood
- Quarry Wood
- Spey Bay

Special Areas of Conservation:

- Cairngorms
- Lower Findhorn Woods
- Lower River Spey- Spey Bay

Special Protection Area:

- Cairngorms
- Darnaway and Lethen Forest

As well as their biodiversity value, Moray’s woodland, and forests play an important role in carbon storage, accumulating approximately 869,000 tonnes of carbon per annum with around 95% of this attributed to conifers and 5% to broadleaved trees.

Challenges to Moray’s woodland and forestry resources include.

- Extreme weather events such as the devastation caused by storm Arwen
- Wildfires, either through natural causes or acts of wilful fire-raising.
- Tree disease
- Renewable energy generation targets resulting in loss of productive forests.
- Herbivore impact, particularly deer (both roe and red)
- Invasive non-native species (INNS)- rhododendron, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed but also other non- native tree species such as beech in native woodland.

Woodland creation targets are set out in the Scottish Government’s Climate Change Plan. Scotland created 8190ha of new woodland in 2022/23 from a target of 15,000ha. Scottish Forestry approved 11,000 ha of new woodland in 2022 but not all of this has bene planted. New woodland planting targets will increase to 16,500 in 2023/24 and up to 18,000ha in 24/25.

Support infrastructure for visitors to Moray’s woodlands and forests are limited, mainly focussed on Culbin and Roseisle with mountain bike trails invested in at Fochabers. There is an opportunity to take a more strategic approach to Moray’s tourism branding and marketing of the woodland and forest resource and to consider a “Climate Forest” approach, linking into the studies on nature networks, carbon offsetting and exploring funding opportunities through the Just Transition Fund.

The draft Strategy provides spatial guidance which can be reflected in the local development plan and Regional Spatial Strategy of different categories for land according to their potential sensitivity for woodland planting as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Land category	Area	%
Existing woodland	63,604	34
Sensitive	21,930	12
Likely to be Unsuitable	11,754	6
Preferred	68,383	36
Potential	4,736	3
Potential with sensitivities	17,059	9
Total hectares	187,466	100

The draft Strategy identifies 6 broad landscape areas across Moray and provides mor specific locational guidance on woodland creation and other related opportunities (p31) which will be reflected in the local development plan.

The role of urban trees is also recognised in the draft strategy, in terms of protection of existing trees and also new planting opportunities. Both individual street trees and urban woodland areas provide health and wellbeing benefits to people, contribute to nature networks and are important measures for climate mitigation and adaptation. There are therefore multiple benefits to be realised through taking an integrated approach to these issues through tree planting, protection, and improved public access.

Register of Tree Preservation Orders

Moray Council maintain an up-to-date register of TPO's. A programme to review existing TPOs was undertaken in autumn 2022 to ensure that all TPOs retained their amenity value and remained appropriate and relevant. Officers undertook site visits and assessed the tree(s)/woodland against MLD Policy EP7 and the reasons for which the TPO was originally served for.

The outcome of the review was considered by the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee at its meeting on 20 December 2022 where it was agreed to revoke 9 TPOs, vary one TPO and serve one TPO. All were confirmed without modification following the required public consultation.

Moray Council currently have 32 TPOs across the region.

Moray Planning Policy Guidance – MLDP2020

To aid delivery or interpretation of MLDP policies in the local context, planning policy guidance was developed to guide developers and officers. Guidance on MLDP Policy EP7 included clarification on the interpretation of 'technically unfeasible' in relation to ability to retain healthy trees and the requirements for compensatory planting.

MLDP Monitoring Report 2023 – Trees and Woodland

The level of tree and woodland removal associated with developments has largely been consistent since the adoption of MLDP 2020. However, since the introduction of NPF4 - which makes no reference to individual trees other than those that are veteran and infers that compensatory planting is not required for losses below 0.1ha – there has been an increase in tree/woodland removal that does not comply with or is deemed an acceptable departure to MLDP Policy EP7. In addition, significantly less compensatory planting has been secured between 2022 and 2023 compared to that which was lost.

In the absence of a local policy which seeks to protect or compensate healthy trees, there is a risk of a return to substantial tree felling (under 0.1ha) to accommodate development, without the provision of compensatory planting.

GIS datasets

The Council holds datasets relating to the Forestry and Woodland Strategy as well as for Ancient Woodlands and carbon and Peatland. These datasets are used in the local development plan process and development management process to ensure there is no adverse impact upon these resources. Taken together the above evidence identifies the importance of woodland and forestry cover in Moray and the resultant wide-ranging benefits these bring.

The datasets provide an invaluable source for the new local development plan to ensure that woodland and forestry resources are safeguarded with particular focus on ancient woodland and other protected trees. The datasets, along with studies referenced in the Biodiversity schedule also highlight opportunities to establish nature networks and connectivity between woodlands.

Stakeholder engagement

Scottish Forestry and Highlands and Islands Enterprise were key partners in the preparation of both the 2018 and 2024 Woodland and Forestry Strategies.

NatureScot and Moray Speyside Tourism were key partners in the preparation of the 2018 Woodland and Forestry Strategy and will be a key consultee on the 2024 draft Strategy.

Copies of the schedules were sent to the following organisations:

- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Nature Scot – see comments below
- Scottish Forestry – see comments below

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- The new Forestry and Woodland Strategy should be reflected in the Regional Spatial Strategy and new Local Development Plan.
- Future policy approaches should reflect the importance of the Forestry industry to the Moray economy.
- The new Local Development Plan should identify place-based opportunities for woodland expansion and incorporate findings from other evidence including nature networks and natural capital to ensure a multi benefit approach.
- The new Local Development Plan should include early engagement with a wide range of stakeholders on the potential for a Moray Climate Forest or similar approach.
- The new Local Development Plan should maximise recreational opportunities to connect people with places.
- Woodlands and trees subject to TPO's to be safeguarded from development and opportunities for new tree and woodland planting to be maximised, where appropriate.
- Local policies should promote use of local wood resources in construction through a Community Wealth Building approach.

Statements of Agreement

Comments received from Scottish Forestry proposing additional datasets which have been added.

Comments received from Nature Scot proposing an extensive list of datasets relating to nature conservation designations and biodiversity which are not considered to be proportionate within this schedule. However, an additional dataset on riparian woodland has been added. NatureScot also requested additional designated sites be added which have a noted woodland interest, which have been included above.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	4. Historic assets and places
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 Section 15(5) • The principal-built heritage characteristics of the district. • Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 • Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
Links to Evidence	<p>CD048 Cullen Seatown Conservation Area Character Appraisal - 2017</p> <p>CD049 Findhorn Conservation Area Character Appraisal - 2017</p> <p>CD050 Keith Mid Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Action Plan – 2010</p> <p>CD051 Archiestown Conservation Area Review (Draft) – 2023</p> <p>CD052 Cullen Conservation Area Review (Draft) - 2023</p> <p>CD053 Findochty Conservation Area Review (Draft) - 2023</p> <p>CD054 Portknockie Conservation Area Review (Draft) - 2023</p> <p>CD045 Moray Planning Policy Guidance - MLDP EP10 Listed Buildings</p> <p>CD055 Our Past, Our Future: The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment</p> <p>CD056 Conservation Area Designation Review 2023 - Committee Report – Appendix 3</p> <p>CD057 Moray Replacement Windows and Doors Guidance 2022</p> <p>CD058 Moray Planning Policy Guidance - NPF4 Policy 2</p> <p>CD059 HES Buildings at Risk Data Spreadsheet</p> <p>Data Sets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List and interactive map of Moray’s conservation areas http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_86282.html • Historic Environment Scotland (HES) heritage designation data and interactive map. Maps and data sets shows all listed buildings, conservation areas, Gardens and Designed Landscapes, and Battlefields. https://hesportal.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=18d2608ac1284066ba3927312710d16d • Moray Historic Environment Record https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/smrpub/master/default.aspx?Authority=Moray • Buildings at Risk Register https://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/search/planning_authority/198
National Planning Framework 4 Context	
<p>Policy 7 Historic assets and places requires LDP’s to support the sustainable management of the historic environment. They should identify, protect, and enhance valued historic assets. Moray’s historic environment helps to define Moray’s identity and sense of place. It not only contributes to its sense of place but also bring huge benefits through its tourism, leisure, and educational value and it is important that this is preserved and enhanced for future generations to enjoy. It can also act as a catalyst for town centre regeneration through heritage-based schemes. It is important that all aspects of the built heritage are protected, such as unlisted building within conservation areas, which can make a valuable contribution to Moray’s built heritage.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
Heritage Designations and assets	

The Moray Council maintains up to date datasets and records of all heritage assets within Moray. This data can be found on the interactive mapping tool on the HES website as well as the Council's own Historic Environment Record (HER) and GIS systems. The Council has this data refreshed every 3 months ensuring that it is accurate and that there are no discrepancies. The data set includes accurate mapping for all conservation areas, listed buildings, gardens and designed landscapes, archaeology sites and monuments, and battlefields. This ensures that all heritage assets are taken into consideration when preparing the proposed plan.

The site checklists that will be prepared to assess new proposals being considered for inclusion in the next LDP will include a section on historic environment information so that any impacts on heritage assets can be assessed from the outset.

Our Past, Our Future – The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment

The strategy sets out Scotland's 5-year national strategy for the historic environment which was published in 2023. The historic environment is a national asset, and it creates jobs, enriches communities, and helps to tell Scotland's story to the world. It's a vital resource in our transition to net zero and in helping local places to thrive. The strategy seeks to enhance the benefits of Scotland heritage and ensuring that the historic environment is at the centre of national life. The next LDP will seek to incorporate the key aims of this strategy and recognise the importance and wide-ranging benefits that Moray's heritage assets can bring.

Conservation Area Review

Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 to designate as conservation areas parts of their areas which are of special historic or architectural interest the character and/or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance, as well as to undertake reviews. Ensuring that conservation area designations are reviewed ensures that the historic environment is protected, valued, and managed sustainably.

To support National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Policy 7 Historic assets and places which seeks to protect and enhance historic environment assets and places through Local Development Plans, a programme of reviewing Moray's conservation areas has begun.

The first phase of this saw four conservation areas being reviewed (Cullen, Portknockie, Findochty and Archiestown) with character appraisals being prepared for each settlement. Following the review and public consultation changes to the boundaries are being proposed to each one except for Portknockie.

It is anticipated that the next phase in the programme will begin shortly.

Moray Council Replacement Windows & Doors Guidance

A long-standing issue in Moray's conservation areas is the cumulative impact of the installation of non-traditional uPVC and aluminium windows. This has begun to have a detrimental impact on the character of several designations. Timber windows are far more sustainable than uPVC windows and offer the lowest level of embodied carbon meaning that less carbon is released in their construction compared with uPVC and aluminium. Timber window frames have similar thermal characteristics to timber windows which is often a false perception. If maintained they will also last longer than uPVC which usually have a lifespan of 20 years, after which they need replaced and will end up in landfill which is not an environmentally sustainable approach given the climate emergency. As such, the replacement and retention of timber windows in historic buildings not only benefits the buildings themselves but it also helps with the drive towards net zero.

Moray Council's Replacement Windows and Doors Guidance was approved as a material consideration by the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee and offers guidance for applicants and Officers in implementing Moray Local Development Plan Policy EP9 Conservation Areas. In particular, for unlisted buildings within a conservation area the policy and guidance require that uPVC windows will only be

acceptable if they are of an appropriate traditional style and are not located on a principal elevation or an elevation on a public view.

NPF4 Policy 7 Historic assets and places does not specifically have a criterion on what types of windows are appropriate for unlisted buildings within a conservation area and refers to protecting the character and appearance in more general terms.

As the current LDP policy and guidance goes into more detail on this issue consideration will be given to a tailored approach in the next LDP.

Windows Repair and Replacement Grant Scheme

At a meeting of Moray Council on 10 August 2022, it was agreed to allocate funding from the Place Based Investment Programme towards a small grant scheme for the fitting or repair of windows in conservation areas. In conjunction with the conservation area review that has been undertaken this seeks to enhance Moray's built heritage.

The Windows Repair and Replacement Grant Scheme was set up to help homeowners repair and replace traditional windows in their property. It was open to any property that within one of Moray's 18 conservation areas that met the eligibility criteria. In total eight grants were awarded to properties in Garmouth, Findhorn, Portknockie, and Findochty. The grants helped homeowners replace non-traditional and/or windows that were in disrepair with traditional timber double glazed windows. The fund not only helped to improve the character and appearance of each conservation area but it also helped to ensure that homeowners were improving the thermal efficiency in a sustainable way. Appendix 3 of the Committee Report that reported the recent conservation area review provides some before and after pictures showing the benefit that the fund brought to these properties and the character of the wider conservation area.

A similar grant scheme is underway for the year 2023/24 with another one programmed for the 2024/25 subject to the indicative allocation of Place Based Improvement Funding (PBIF) being approved by the Scottish Government.

Enabling Development

Planning Policy Guidance was prepared to assist with the implementation and assessment of MLDP policies. This included guidance on the enabling development section of Policy EP10. The guidance seeks to provide clarity as to what is required when an application is made for a proposal of this nature. NPF4 is supportive of enabling development proposals but does not go into the same level of detail as the current guidance. As such the proposed plan should consider a tailored approach.

Vacant Buildings/Brownfield Land

NPF4 places a significant emphasis and priority to the redevelopment of brownfield sites. NPF4 defines "brownfield" as land which has previously been developed. This covers vacant or derelict land, and land occupied by redundant or unused buildings. The redevelopment or reuse of brownfield sites and buildings for housing or businesses can bring unused or underutilised sites back into productive use and reduce the need for expansion onto greenfield land. The Council will endeavour to work with owners to help bring these sites back into use through advice or trying to identify funding opportunities for example.

Moray Historic Environment Record

The full version of the database is held and maintained by the Archaeology Service and contains information on over 10,475 known sites of archaeological and historical interest ranging from Late Upper Palaeolithic flints to airfields of World War II. The information consists of a computerised database linked to a GIS with further physical records of maps, photographs, articles and reports. Note the database is not exhaustive and only covers currently known sites.

Scheduled Monuments

Moray currently has 74 designated Scheduled Monuments which are sporadically located throughout the area, both within settlements and in more rural and remote areas. Owing to the nature of the designation there is no meaningful pattern associated with their geographic spread. This reflects the depth of the time period covered by the designation, and the very varied nature of the function, and therefore location, of the remains included.

Analysis of the data shows there is likely to be conflict with development aspirations associated with some of the settlements across Moray where Scheduled Monuments lie within or in the vicinity of the settlement. There may also be conflict which may restrict rural development in some parts of Moray.

The most likely conflict that will occur is where development impacts on the setting of these protected assets. Setting extends beyond the legally defined footprint of each individual Scheduled area into each site's broader landscape context. Both tangible and less tangible elements can be important in understanding the setting, including the relationships between sites such as prehistoric burial cairns where intervisibility between contemporary monuments was crucial. The setting of some of these sites can also be a contributing factor of landscape character.

The majority of Scheduled sites in Moray are situated within a rural context and due to their nature (some being earthworks or are entirely buried and only known from cropmark evidence) are sensitive to the encroachment of woodland and tree planting. Policy 6 Forestry, woodland, and trees will create occasional conflicts for these types of sites owing to the presumption that development proposals that enhance, expand, and improve woodland and tree cover will be supported.

As with potential impacts on setting, each development proposal will need to be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with Historic Environment Scotland

Local Heritage & Unlisted buildings

Through the LDP engagement and LPP process, communities have the chance to highlight buildings that have cultural importance to them that may not be covered by an existing designation. Unlisted buildings outwith a conservation can make a valuable contribution to the sense of place of a town or area. Even though these buildings are not protected or given the status of a formal designation they are often regarded as being significantly important to local communities, not only in the physical sense but also how people have emotional attachments to buildings and assets. This can be critical to defining their "sense of place" within a town or settlement which can be important for mental health and well-being. This could be achieved through recognising them within the Historic Environment Record (HER) database (many such buildings are already included within the database).

Given the lack of a formal designation, unlisted buildings are often vulnerable from inappropriate redevelopment opportunities or demolition. Decisions on proposals for unlisted buildings must be made on planning reasons which often leads to frustration amongst communities where there is that emotional attachment or they contribute to their "sense of place".

NPF4 places a strong emphasis on tackling the climate emergency with the drive to net zero. Local guidance was introduced from 1 July 2023 to support the implementation of NPF4 which requires new developments to be designed to minimise lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions as far as possible and adapt to current and future risks from climate change. Reusing and bringing vacant buildings back into use will be a key element of this strategy with the drive to develop less on greenfield land. In delivering this key aim will be reducing the whole life carbon footprint of a proposal. From this perspective reusing a building and/or materials will significantly reduce the amount of carbon being expended during construction. As such proposals are currently required to demonstrate this through a carbon assessment.

The next LDP will look at this issue in more detail and how unlisted buildings of cultural or historical importance could be given better protection to support the aims of preserving and enhancing unlisted buildings with an emphasis of carbon reduction and meeting net zero.

Undesignated Historic Environment Assets

Analysis of the Historic Environment Record shows there is likely to be conflict with development aspirations associated with all settlements across Moray. It is also highly likely that there will be conflict which may restrict or otherwise influence rural development in some parts of Moray according to the specific site location.

In order to resolve such an inevitable significant issue for development, NPF4 Policy 7 makes provision, in that where impacts cannot be avoided, they should be minimised. Where it has been demonstrated that avoidance or retention is not possible, excavation, recording, analysis, archiving, publication, and activities to provide public benefit may be required through the use of Conditions or legal/planning obligations.

Owing to the density of known archaeological remains across Moray, and the significant potential for further remains awaiting discovery, there is a likely to be significant impact on these remains through any allocation and subsequent development. While the policy preference in the first instance is preservation in situ, the reality is that in the vast majority of cases the mitigation options provided by Policy 7 above will be used when assessing sites, and for ensuring delivery of development in an appropriate and sustainable manner.

Buildings at Risk Register

The Buildings at Risk Register was created in 1990 in response to a growing number of Listed buildings and buildings in Conservation Areas that were vacant and had fallen into a state of disrepair. The Register is maintained by Historic Environment Scotland and provides information on properties of architectural or historic merit that are considered to be at risk. Note the register is not exhaustive and only covers currently identified sites at risk.

Forres Conservation & Heritage Scheme

Early work has begun on the Forres Conservation and Heritage scheme. The project seeks to explore ways to develop, promote and conserve the historic character of the Forres conservation area to boost the local economy. The delivery phase is currently under way which will run until September 2024. If successful, the subsequent Delivery Phase will provide funding over a 5-year period which will not only bring physical improvements to the built heritage but also, improve the local economy by increasing visitors and footfall, promoting traditional skills, and providing more opportunities for social interaction and community cohesion. This work will feed into the next LDP as well as potentially providing the opportunity to align with delivering projects within the Forres Town Centre Improvement Plan (TCIP).

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Historic Environment Scotland – see Statements of agreement.

Regional Archaeology Service- comments received have been included within the schedule.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- Consider a tailored approach to windows for unlisted buildings within conservation areas based on the existing LDP policy and local knowledge,
- Continue to undertake a review of Moray’s conservation areas. Revised CA boundaries to be reflected in the new Local Development Plan.
- Identification of unused or vacant buildings in conservations areas through Vacant & Derelict Land Survey.
- Consider how unlisted buildings of local cultural or historic importance outwith conservation areas could be given better protection.

- Consider potential impact on designated and undesignated historic environment assets, both direct and indirect, on a case-by-case basis. This will be supported through the ongoing updating and maintenance of the HER database.

Statements of Agreement

Historic Environment Scotland

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) note they were satisfied with the sufficiency of the evidence set out within the schedule subject to the inclusion of the data from the Buildings at Risk Register which will support the stated aims relating to reusing vacant buildings and brownfield land. The supporting information that was provided is noted and has been linked to the schedule. However, as stated in HES's response, that while efforts are made to ensure it is kept up to date the information may be outdated. Access to this data is not held by Moray Council.

HES's response states that NPF4 and the Scottish Government's Local Development Plan Guidance should be included as evidence. However, Moray Council considers that these documents are not evidence rather they provide policy context and guidance.

It is the Council's intention to align the site checklists with SEA objectives as suggested by HES.

The following are a summary of other comments provided in the response.

- Consider updating the Windows and Doors Guidance in light of NPF4 and changes to permitted development rights which are being considered.
- Consider updating the Council's Planning Policy Guidance on enabling development to reflect NPF4.
- Support commitment to work with owners to help bring vacant properties back into use with the Buildings at Risk Register being an important tool.

While these comments are more observations rather than relating to specific evidence the comments are noted.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	5. Energy
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 15(5)- the infrastructure of the district and how that infrastructure is used.
Links to Evidence	<p>CD060 Scottish Government Draft Energy and Just Transition Plan CD037 Moray Wind Energy Landscape Sensitivity Study - 2023 CD061 Moray Council mapping of operational, consented and proposed onshore wind farms. CD062 Moray Table of Consented and Operational Wind Farms Over 80m in Moray – (as at 22 Jan 2024) CD063 Moray Hydrogen Strategy 2022 CD033 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – 2023 CD034 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – Appendix CD035 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – Appendix LSS CD028 Moray Council Local Development Plan Monitoring Report 2023 CD007 Moray Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 CD064 Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022 CD036 Moray Local Landscape Designation Review - 2018 CD065 Scottish Government Hydrogen Action Plan 2022 CD066 Moray Council report to Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee 6th February 2024 Hydrogen update</p>
National Planning Framework 4 context	
LDPs should seek to realise their area’s full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy development.	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Scottish Government draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023)</p> <p>The strategy sets out the Scottish Government’s plan to transforms the way Scotland generates, transports, and uses energy. This presents a huge opportunity to deliver maximum benefits to Scotland’s people, workers, communities, and economy from our vast renewable energy resources.</p> <p>Targets in the draft Strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 20GW of additional renewable electricity on and offshore by 2023. An ambition for hydrogen to provide 5GW or the equivalent of 15% of Scotland’s current energy needs by 2030 and 25GW of hydrogen capacity by 2045. Increased contributions from solar, hydro, and marine energy to our energy mix. Accelerated decarbonisation of domestic, industry, transport, and heat. By 2030, the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans to be phased out and car kilometres reduced by 20%. Generation of surplus electricity, enabling export of electricity and renewable hydrogen to support decarbonisation across Europe. Energy security through development of our own resources and additional energy storage. A Just Transition by maintaining or increasing employment in Scotland’s energy production sector against a decline in North Sea production. 	

Just Transition Fund

The Just Transition Fund is available in the north-east of Scotland to transition away from oil and gas sector and develop green skills and jobs. Moray Council has secured funding to support a number of projects including developing a Hydrogen Strategy, brownfield site studies, developing the Keith Green Energy Infrastructure Framework and works at Buckie Harbour to support the offshore sector.

The Just Transition Fund could be a key source of funding to link together and deliver projects within the Proposed Plan and evidenced in the schedules for Housing, Natural Capital, Biodiversity and this schedule and support Just Transition bids from other organisations in Moray.

National Grid projects

NPF4 identifies national developments, including the Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure project which includes upgrading of the Beauly to Peterhead via Blackhillock overhead transmission line. The project is required to meet UK and Scottish Government climate change and energy security targets. The project helps to accelerate the deployment of homegrown and affordable low carbon electricity generation, together with developing the electricity network infrastructure required to connect and transport this power. Offshore wind energy developments connect into the grid at Portgordon. Moray Council will continue to engage with Scottish and Southern Energy Network (SSEN) on future grid infrastructure projects and this will be reflected in the MLDP 2027.

Blackhillock sub station is the largest in the UK and the second largest in northern Europe. Blackhillock offers the opportunity for co-location of a number of development opportunities which benefit from proximity to green energy source including battery storage schemes and potentially hydrogen production. However, this area has seen significant development pressure and needs to be planned, which has resulted in the production of the Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework 2023 below.

As a result of grid infrastructure improvements, it is anticipated that piecemeal development pressure from development that supports the National Grid, will be experienced in other areas where transmission and distribution infrastructure exist. There is a need to consider how best to provide a policy framework to direct such proposals, for example battery storage, to suitable locations and understand their siting requirements e.g. proximity to sub-stations.

Grid capacity is not seen as a constraint to development and for developer-led projects, SSEN have a legal responsibility to connect developments to the electricity network. Grid capacity is address more fully in Schedule 10a *Infrastructure*.

Keith Green Energy & Infrastructure Framework 2023

The Keith and Blackhillock areas were coming under increasing development pressure, on a piecemeal basis, from development that supports the National Grid and there is no forward planning to identify necessary infrastructure or development potential, which undermines the plan-led system advocated by the Government.

With national developments promoted in NPF4, including Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure, a development framework has been developed for the Keith and Blackhillock areas in order to make best use of surrounding land and appropriately control the opportunities arising from renewables associated with the grid infrastructure and energy systems/storage. Based on a landscape sensitivity assessment, the Framework identifies potential development sites for a range of uses and associated landscape mitigation required.

The Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement 2022

Statement sets an overall ambition of 20GW of installed onshore wind capacity in Scotland by 2030. The Statement recognises that high ambition is delivered in a way that is fully aligned with, and continues to enhance, our natural heritage and native flora and fauna, and supports our actions to address the nature crises and the climate crisis.

Wind Energy Developments in Moray

Moray Council has experienced significant pressure for onshore wind farms over the last 20 plus years. Details of operational, consented and proposed wind farms, extensions and repowering are set out in the evidence table. The table demonstrates that Moray currently has operational and consented capacity for 1,252MW of generation from wind farms (over 80m) alone.

Two areas of significant cumulative impact have/ are emerging at Dallas/ Knockando Moor and Cabrach which have resulted in significant adverse landscape and visual impacts. Moray Council has objected to a number of large-scale wind farms, however despite having up to date local policy guidance and landscape capacity studies/ landscape sensitivity studies adopted, proposals have continued to be consented, contrary to local development plan policy.

The Landscape Sensitivity Study 2023 accords with the NatureScot methodology set out in their Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance 2022. LSS are intended to inform strategic planning for wind energy and to provide information that can assist in the evaluation of specific development proposals and are a tool to help guide development to the best location. The LSS replaces previous Landscape Capacity Studies from 2017 and 2012 and Wind Energy Policy Guidance which has been kept up to date since originally introduced in 2002, endeavouring to provide an up- to- date policy framework to guide developments to the most suitable locations.

The LSS considers broad landscape and visual sensitivities, identifying constraints and opportunities at a strategic scale. The sensitivity assessments have been undertaken on the basis of Assessment Units (page 18/ Figure 3) which are closely allied to Landscape Character types. The study considers the sensitivity of Assessment Units to a limited number of pre- determined turbine types, principally based on height, individual applications need to be considered on a case by case basis with some flexibility on turbine heights being applied within close range of the upper height threshold used in the sensitivity assessment.

A number of the Assessment Units have experienced significant development pressure and the findings for these from the LSS are summarised below.

- Assessment Unit 10 Upland Moorland and Forestry

This landscape accommodates the operational Rothes 1 and 2 and Hill of Glaschyle wind farms and consented Meikle Hill, Clash Gour and Rothes 3 wind farms. The operational Berry Burn and Paul's Hill wind farms and the consented Paul's Hill 2 and Berry Burn 2 extensions are located to the south within the adjacent Open Rolling Uplands. Page 51 of the LSS sets out the key cumulative landscape and visual issues and constraints, including:

- The extensive operational and consented wind farms already located in this Assessment Unit which severely limits opportunities for further development to be located whilst minimising effects on adjacent more sensitive landscapes and on views.

The LSS concludes (page 52) that there would be High sensitivity to turbines >150m and a High-medium sensitivity to turbines <150m. The LSS recognises (page 53) that there may be opportunities to minimise effects on surrounding more sensitive landscape and visual receptors by repowering well sited operational wind farms located in the less sensitive interior of these uplands.

- Assessment Unit 11- Open Rolling Uplands

This Assessment Unit accommodates the operational Berry Burn and Paul's Hill wind farms. The consented Paul's Hill 2, Berry Burn 2 and part of Cash Gour also lie within this landscape. The operational Rothies 1 and 2 and Hill of Glaschyle wind farms are located within the adjacent Upland Moorland and Forestry. The consented Meikle Hill, Kellas and Rothies 3 wind farms are sited close to the Rothies 1 and 2 wind farms in the Upland Moorland and Forestry. Page 55 sets out the key cumulative landscape and visual issues and constraints, including;

- The extensive operational and consented wind farms already located in this Assessment Unit which severely limits opportunities for further development to be located whilst minimising effects on adjacent more sensitive landscapes and on views.

The LSS concludes (page 57) that this landscape has a high sensitivity to turbines >150m and a High-medium sensitivity to turbines 100-150m. Repowering of operational wind farms within the interior of these uplands is likely to provide most scope for accommodating larger turbines whilst minimising landscape and visual effects.

- Assessment Unit 14 Open Uplands with Settled Glens

The operational Dorenell wind farm is located in this Assessment Unit. The consented Garbet wind farm is also located in the northern part of this Assessment Unit. The operational Clashindarroch and Kidrummy wind farms located in neighbouring Aberdeenshire and more distant wind farms in Moray are visible from the hill summits and ridges in this Assessment Unit. Page 67 sets out the key cumulative landscape and visual issues and constraints, including;

- Cumulative effects with any additional wind energy developments seen in combination with the operational Dorenell and Clashindarroch wind farms on the Deveron valley and in views from the A941.

The LSS concludes that this landscape has a high sensitivity to turbines >150m and a High-medium sensitivity to turbines 100-150m.

The LSS (page 71) sets out a summary of findings and recommendations including the need to safeguard landmark hills, less developed upland areas, the coast and wider seascape, extensive forests and dramatic narrow valleys and scenic approaches to Moray, protect the character and special qualities of the Special Landscape Areas and an ongoing review of cumulative landscape and visual effects of multiple wind turbine developments.

The cumulative impact of wind farms is clearly a key issue to be considered as part of the approach to maximising opportunities for renewable energy.

Solar

The focus of development proposals for solar energy in Moray is largely limited to domestic scale. There have been no commercial-scale solar developments in the current Local Development Plan period.

Between 2021 and 2022, 3 domestic-scale applications relating to solar panels/arrays were consented. 8 applications for solar panels/arrays were consented between 2022 and 2023. Four applications were for larger scaled development (317kW; 129kW; 115kW and 110kW) associated with existing business/utility properties.

Battery storage

A number of battery storage proposals have come forward in Moray and been consented in urban and rural locations. These can be land hungry proposals which generate limited employment opportunities beyond the construction phase and this has created a policy tension where these have been proposed on designated employment areas. This has reduced the area available for higher employment yielding uses and results in further employment land having to be identified to meet employment land requirements.

There is a need to consider how best to provide a policy framework to direct battery storage proposals to suitable locations and understand their siting requirements e.g. proximity to sub-stations.

Hydrogen

The Scottish Government Hydrogen Action Plan 2022

Development of a hydrogen economy is a national priority. In December 2020, the Scottish Government published a Hydrogen Policy Statement which aims for Scotland to be a “leading hydrogen nation in the production of reliable, competitive, sustainable hydrogen”. The Action Plan supports the Government’s targets to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and a 75% reduction by 2030 against the 1990 baseline. Achieving these targets means that actions will be required at an unprecedented pace to enable steps towards net zero, within which development of a hydrogen economy could be a key element. The sixth Carbon budget report from the Climate Change Committee suggest that hydrogen production in the UK could scale up to 90TWh by 2035, which is the equivalent of a third of the current power in the UK.

The Action Plan recognises that hydrogen can be used to decarbonise many parts of our economy, including industry, transport, power and heat. Transported through the gas grid it could help decarbonise commercial premises and make a contribution to decarbonising home energy use. For energy intensive industries, switching to hydrogen is considered one of the limited viable options for significant decarbonisation over the next 10 years.

Moray Council Hydrogen Strategy 2022

Moray has access to significant sources of green renewable power including offshore and onshore wind farms which, subject to contract, could create the conditions required to produce green hydrogen within Moray at scale.

The Council has approved a Hydrogen Strategy on 6th September 2022 which aims to support the Scotland Hydrogen Action Plan. The Council is exploring opportunities with partners to develop pilot projects and considering suitable hydrogen production and refuelling sites. A report to the Council’s Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee on 6th February 2024 approved a Scoping Report for delivery of Phase 2 of the Moray Hydrogen Strategy.

Developing a hydrogen economy in Moray during the short to medium term, including connecting into adjacent areas, could:

- contribute towards a reduction in greenhouse gas and particulate emissions;
- improve the security of Moray’s energy supply;
- increase and make better use of local renewable energy generation; and
- help to address fuel poverty issues, particularly in rural areas.

To deliver a hydrogen economy the following key steps are proposed in the Moray Hydrogen Strategy:

- In the short term (2023-2030): Create a hydrogen steering group within Moray to drive the development of hydrogen opportunities, stimulating both supply and demand. This group is led by Moray Council and includes key stakeholders from the industrial base and wider community.
- Develop a pilot project to generate demand for hydrogen locally. A small-scale pilot project or projects are proposed to include combined hydrogen generators, storage and refuelling at a single site. The potential locations to be considered are Lossiemouth, Aberlour, Buckie Harbour, Keith and Elgin.
- In the short to medium term, the aim is to expand the hydrogen generation facilities to further stimulate the demand from road freight transport and from the industrial users such as the distilleries.
- In the long term (beyond 2040), the hydrogen economy for Moray could be based on generating hydrogen from green electricity sources within Moray, purchasing hydrogen from

outside the area, and distributing hydrogen through the area through a pipeline network. The demand for hydrogen would come from a wider range of sectors including the distilleries, other high-heat industry, the road haulage industry, council services and potentially to heat homes and businesses.

To progress delivery of the Moray Hydrogen Strategy a grant from The Just Transition Fund was received. This allowed development of a scoping report for the delivery of Phase 2 of the Hydrogen Strategy. This research recommended to separate the pilot into two aspects – an initial small pilot for Council fleet vehicles using hydrogen from outwith Moray, and the later development of public refuelling facilities as the hydrogen economy matures.

The Council is exploring a pilot project with a small number of hydrogen vehicles as part of our fleet of vehicles. An initial pilot should include refuelling facilities for Council vehicles at the depot using a hydrogen fuel supply from outwith Moray.

Socio-economic benefits from Energy Developments

NPF4 Policy 11 c) states that “Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities.”

Moray and Highland Councils jointly commissioned Biggar Economics to undertake a review of Socio-economic benefits arising from energy related development and to consider whether they were being maximised and if not, to develop a methodology to maximise benefits. This is discussed further in the schedule on Community Wealth Building.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Copies of this schedule were sent to the following organisations:

- Cabrach Trust
- RenewablesUK
- Scottish Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association
- SSEN Transmission and SSEN Distribution
- Finderne and Speyside Community Councils
- Scottish Gas Networks

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- The Proposed Plan should consider a tailored local policy approach to maximise renewable energy opportunities in Moray.
- The Proposed Plan should consider a tailored local policy approach to onshore wind energy to direct the right development to the right place, reflecting the concerns regarding cumulative impact and the need to balance with opportunities for woodland expansion, peatland restoration and food production.
- The Proposed Plan should consider policy position to direct waste to energy projects to suitable locations.
- The Proposed Plan should support development of a hydrogen economy, identifying opportunities for production and refuelling sites.
- The Proposed Plan should identify the route of national grid upgrades and other key energy infrastructure and consider a tailored local policy approach for associated supporting development in order to direct the right development to the right place, reflecting concerns regarding cumulative impact.
- The Proposed Plan should consider policy position to protect designated employment land from renewable energy and National Grid-associated development.

Statements of Agreement

Finderne Community Council

Finderne Community Council previously took the position of objecting to new windfarm proposals in the area, participating in the Public Local Inquiry on the Clash Gour wind farm. Policy of the community council is now to maximise benefit to the local area.

However, many people within the community do not wish for any further proliferation of wind farms on the hills and moorland in the Finderne area. Concerns regarding industrialisation of a rural landscape, impacts of wildlife, risk of wildfires due to changed habitat management practices and potential impact of turbine lighting at night.

Finderne Community Council has discussed battery storage proposals near Berryburn wind farm and the proposed new transmission route and have raised no particular concerns about these.

SSEN Distribution

SSEN has identified no areas of dispute but suggested some additional evidence to consider.

- Distribution Future Energy Scenarios: 2022 reports available here: [SSEN Distribution Future Energy Scenarios - Regen](#); 2023 reports available April 2024
- Network Development Plans: [Network Capacity Information - SSEN](#)
- Smart and Fair: Working with the smart energy capabilities lens - [Smart and Fair: working with the smart energy capabilities lens - Centre for Sustainable Energy \(cse.org.uk\)](#)
- A Fair Energy Future: Unlocking a Just Transition for Consumers - [ssen-a-fair-energy-future.pdf](#)

SSEN Transmission

National Grid Projects

- Recommend replacing “National Grid projects” with Electricity Grid Developments” to define the topic being related to electricity. As a means of comparison, Gas has its own national grid. National Grid is also a separate company to SSEN Transmission, so use of this phrase could be misleading. SSEN Transmission is the only electrical transmission operator in the north of Scotland. National Grid, as a company, operate in England and Wales.
- The renewable energy target should say “2030” instead of “2023”.
- As per our presentation to planning officers in August 2023, we’d welcome the distinction between SSEN Transmission and SSEN Distribution, rather than the generalisation of “SSEN”. Whilst both companies are important electricity grid providers, they play different roles and operate separately of each other as per our regulated licensing requirements.
- Blackhillock substation is owned and managed by SSEN Transmission
- It would be helpful to reference that SSEN Transmission’s future grid investment is part of a Great Britain (GB) wide plan that is led by National Grid ESO (Electricity System Operator) and needed to achieve the UK and Scottish Government’s 2030 renewable energy targets.

Council response - Agree to the minor changes requested.

Socio-economic benefits from Energy Developments

- We haven’t had sight of the schedule on Community Wealth Building. It would have been useful to have seen this.
- As a business regulated by OFGEM in the interest of the electricity consumer, there will be limits to what SSEN Transmission can offer in this respect of community wealth building and socio-economic benefits. As part of our forthcoming work on our Accelerated Strategic

Transmission Investment (ASTI) projects, we will be introducing a pot of money that called a Community Benefit Fund. The sum of offer has not yet been finalised, but this will enable charities and communities groups to apply for funding from it. [Community Benefit Fund - SSEN Transmission \(ssen-transmission.co.uk\)](https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk).

- Between now and 2030, SSEN Transmission expects investment in transmission grid projects to exceed £20 billion. Moray will undoubtedly benefit from this investment socio-economically.

Council response - Noted, however National Planning Framework 4 Policies 11 and 25 bring the maximisation of net economic benefit and community wealth building into the planning system which is a significant change to community benefit.

Battery storage

- On “Battery Storage”, it would be fair to say that the close proximity of battery storage sites to SSEN Transmission substations has restricted SSEN Transmission’s ability to make extensions to their existing substations and therefore have had to look at sites detached from their existing sites to meet transmission grid upgrades.

Solar

- A large commercial scale Solar Farm south of Lintmill is coming forward. It may only be at Section 36 (under Electricity Act 1989) pre-app stage.

Council response - Noted.

Speyside Community Council

Fully support the summary of implications for the proposed plan. However, have concerns that the Scottish Government will continue to overturn locally made decisions.

Statements of Dispute

Speyside Community Council

Speyside Community Council made the following general observations formed as a result of Speyside Community Council’s experiences of the planning process.

- 1) NPF 4:
 - From the layperson’s perspective, it seems that the framework has been written by people who are working in isolation from each other. Many of the Principles/Policies do not complement each other particularly well and in some instances seem to contradict one another.
 - One could be of the opinion that this is the urban elite telling rural communities what is good for them.
 - The Framework is easily interpreted in diverse ways and frequently is.
- 2) Scottish Government Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (2023): Many of the targets will be very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve e.g. accelerated decarbonisation of domestic, industry, transport, heat and maintaining or increasing employment in Scotland’s energy sector. ‘Green jobs’ are disappearing.
- 3) National Grid Projects:
 - We think that it is debatable as to whether or not there is affordable low carbon electricity generation when so many households are in fuel poverty.
 - Grid capacity may not be a constraint but constraint payments, paid by bill payers, to windfarms exacerbates fuel poverty. Enough battery storage will take some years to install.

- 4) The Scottish Government Onshore Wind Policy Statement:
 - It is difficult to reconcile windfarm expansion with enhancing our natural heritage and native flora and fauna.
 - Statements are easy to make. Visible proof is not obvious.
- 5) Wind Energy Developments in Moray:
 - SCC fully supports Moray Council's comments regarding the Scottish Government's position in overturning decisions made by Moray Council. This demonstrates a significant lack of democracy, in our opinion.
 - Despite having up to date local policy guidance etc, we do not expect this situation to change and, SG will continue to over-rule democratic decisions.
 - Unfortunately, we are hearing more and more that people are reluctant to engage in the planning process as they perceive that the outcome is a foregone conclusion.
- 6) Battery Storage: SCC has concerns regarding the safety of battery storage. We need more information.
- 7) Socio-Economic Benefits from Energy Developments: NPF4 Policy 11c. It would be interesting to see Biggar Economics Review. While there may be many local jobs and business opportunities during the construction period, most of these will disappear when the windfarm is operational.

The Community Council has also commented that the Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy Supplementary Guidance should be added to this section, but unsure if the draft of the new strategy has been completed and /or approved. Renewable energy proposals and woodland/ forest creation both impact on the climate emergency, the nature emergency and ultimately in potential changes of land use.

Community Council believe that the two should be considered together as having cumulative effects on the natural environment and current land use, it cannot be only windfarms that are subject to cumulative effect.

35% of Moray is covered in woodland, how much land is taken up by windfarms? That probably leaves about 50% of Moray for housing, farming and other industries. It feels as though people are being squeezed out.

Acknowledge that Moray Council is not responsible agency for woodlands/ forestry but does have a part to play in a consultancy role.

Council response - Noted concerns regarding national policy approach and concerns regarding cumulative impacts as expressed in the evidence.

The Council is exploring a regional land use partnership approach to how the different, sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementary approaches to land use planning come together and the Regional Spatial Strategy will provide a strategic approach to this.

The report on Socio- economic benefits by Biggar will be consider by Council on 24th April 2024 and will be made publicly available.

Cabrach Trust

The Carbrach Trust made the following observations.

- 1) The policy approach to current and future renewable energy projects is a key consideration closely linked with all aspects of regeneration of the Cabrach, including preserving and enhancing the existing special features of the landscape, through the fair and just

transformation of the locality. At this stage the Trust wishes to set out its view on the context that should inform the development of policy.

- 2) The 2023 Q3 energy statistics were published in December 2023 and when compared to the 2023 Q4 statistics, the main changes are in the pipeline figures which continue to show that the official energy statistics are now recognising the clear potential for excessive generation provision when the 41.2GW figure is compared with the Ofgem predicted peak future 2050 Scottish demand figure of 9.4GW. This conclusion becomes even more pronounced if the likely future outputs from all of the Scotwind offshore leases are also included, leading to a potential generation of over 70GW, almost 8 times the predicted future peak demand.
- 3) A similar situation arises in relation to the suggested provision of very significant new Overhead Transmission Lines and very substantial sub stations as proposed by SSEN. As set out by Ofgem and National Grid ESO, the strategic intention behind this proposed infrastructure is to connect offshore wind farms to consumers in the south of England. To date, despite being asked many times by various local groups, SSEN have failed to list the offshore wind farms that the proposed infrastructure has been designed to serve. The objective in seeking that information is to test the need case and, therefore, in the absence of that information there is no established need case for what is being proposed. This focus on the need case stems from the Dalmally OHL proposal Public Local Inquiry in Argyll and Bute. During the oral evidence sessions SSEN were forced to admit that the consented capacity of the wind farms awaiting connection through this proposed new infrastructure amounted to just 6% of the proposed capacity of the OHL. The other 94% was speculative provision for future as yet undetermined wind farm applications.
- 4) The Cabrach area already has two operational wind farms and two consented but unbuilt wind farms (as well as three other wind farms at various planning stages). Given the energy baseline, it is the view of the Trust that there is absolutely no need for any further wind farms (and related infrastructure) in the Cabrach. The emerging policy focus should be on natural heritage, regeneration and a just transition, themes that will be set out in the Local Place Plan that is currently being prepared.
- 5) How we collectively position the standing of the 2023 LSS is an important matter. The LSS methodology and findings are strong, and the Trust's cumulative impact concerns align strongly herein. The evidence template notes the Cabrach specifically by way of cumulative impact concern, which further piques puzzlement within the community with regards Moray Council's position not to oppose Clashindarroch Extension wind farm. Worth noting here is that Richard Lochhead MSP maintains that concern, recently writing to the Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy.
- 6) Beyond the Cabrach's status as a centuries old settled glen, the position of landmark hills herein, and associated scenic gateway status, we believe the particular nature and fragility of our upland ecology and importance of the upper river Deveron catchment requires emphasis. Further onshore wind development, including battery storage, in this locality risks irreversible damage associated with surface water run off (and associated river health and downstream flooding risks), ground water imbalance (PH and private water supply), habitat damage and loss, and negative impacts on significant moss and peatlands.
- 7) With reference to Just Transition and Just Transition Fund, both form a critical part of our regeneration vision and strategy for the Cabrach. That strategy has been cited as a potential exemplar for rural regeneration and Just Transition in action, although this could equally be

undermined by cumulative impact. Is this worth referencing in the LDP? For context, the Trust has now successfully secured Just Transition funding across years 1 and 2 of the fund; via the Scottish Government in Year 1 and via Social Investment Scotland in Year 2.

- 8) Purported socio-economic benefits, including increased local employment, associated with onshore wind developments are ever increasingly proving to be inaccurate, inflated, misleading, or untrue. This matter, alongside the increased public awareness associated with exorbitant constraint payments costs, is being increasingly reported on locally and nationally, causing further disquiet. The Trust welcomes sight of the Biggar Economics Review.

Council response

Comments noted. The Regional Spatial Strategy and new Local Development Plan offer the opportunity to provide a strategic vision of just transition in Moray. The Council is currently considering a number of workstreams and how they can be aligned into a comprehensive just transition project.

The Biggar Economics Report and draft supplementary guidance relating to National Planning Framework Policy 9 regarding socio economic benefits will be presented to Moray Council on 24 April 2024 and thereafter be subject to 12 weeks public engagement.

Issue: Topic / Place	6. Design, quality and place
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 Section 15(5)(a) ‘the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district’
Links to Evidence	<p>CD001 Moray Local Development Plan 2020 - Volume 1 - Policies CD045 Moray Planning Policy Guidance - MLDP CD067 Moray Council Supporting Document for Policy PP1 Placemaking CD068 Moray Council Quality Audit Template CD069 Moray Council Quality Audit 2015 CD070 Moray Council Quality Audit 2020 CD071 Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Reports 2019 CD072 Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report 2021 CD028 Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report 2023 CD025 Moray Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2021 – 2023 CD007 Moray Council Climate Change Strategy 2020 – 2030 CD029 Moray Council Open Space Strategy – Supplementary Guidance 2018 CD073 Mobility Mood Place CD074 Public Health Scotland Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025 CD075 Moray Council Active Travel Strategy Annual Update 2023 CD076 Transport Scotland – A routemap to achieve a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030 CD077 Community Safety Strategy CD078 Moray Council Active Travel Strategy 2022 – 2027</p>
National Planning Framework (NPF) Context	
<p>Policy 14 Design, quality and place requires LDP’s to be place based and in line with the Place Principle. LDP’s should provide clear expectations for design, quality, and place taking account of local context, characteristics, and connectivity of the area. Development proposals that are poorly designed, detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area or inconsistent with the six qualities of successful places, will not be supported.</p> <p>The detailed Placemaking policies in conjunction with the Quality Audit (QA) process in both the Moray Local Development Plan 2015 & 2020 have been successfully delivering the outcomes of the 6 qualities of a successful place as set out in NPF4 (and previously Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)) in a Moray specific context. This tailored approach to placemaking has ensured that all developments are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well connected to support walking and cycling by providing good active travel routes to support healthy living; • attractive through creating distinct places that represent their locality with the requirement for developments to provide distinct character area; • Create safe and welcoming communities that have been designed to be inclusive and accessible for all as well as being designed to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour; • support climate change and biodiversity by embedding blue and green infrastructure into developments by recognising this as key design component; and • providing high quality inclusive and accessible open spaces to encourage social interaction throughout communities supporting good physical and mental wellbeing. 	

These detailed placemaking policies have the NPF4 principle of Local Living embedded throughout and recognise the importance of creating well-designed mixed-use neighbourhoods and all the associated health benefits that come from them. Further information on this policy area can be found in the Local Living schedule.

Summary of Evidence

Introduction

The Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2015 first introduced Placemaking as a Primary Policy. Along with the Urban Design SG, it was the first time that a MLDP had its own specific policy relating to Placemaking with the aims of achieving higher standards of Urban Design. Good placemaking brings not only improvements to the physical urban fabric but also wider benefits to society through supporting good physical and mental health, reducing health inequalities, and improving people's wellbeing, and supporting nature, biodiversity, and climate resilience. The policy was deemed to be successful in improving standards of urban design. However, it became clear through the operation of the policy that further clarity over what was required to meet the six qualities of a successful place was required.

Placemaking was further emphasised and embodied in the MLDP 2020 with PP1 Placemaking being the first Primary Policy in the plan. This Policy reflected the 6 Qualities of a Successful Place in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) but was much more detailed and prescriptive and tailored to issues identified in Moray. It also recognised the importance of placemaking in improving people's mental and physical health. For example, the aspirations of the Mood, Mobility and Place project identified the benefits of co-design to support outdoor activity, health, well-being, and inter-generational community engagement and interaction which were all incorporated into the policy.

Key Design Principles

For certain sites within the MLDP 2020, key design principles were prepared to assist deliver high quality layouts in line with the placemaking policy. These principles were shown graphically on a plan and highlighted key design components such as connections, open space, character areas etc that must be incorporated into any planning application. This helped to provide site specific element to the placemaking policy. Should a tailored approach to placemaking be considered then key design principles could also be considered as part of this approach.

Masterplans

Over both the MLDP 2015 and 2020 period several masterplans were prepared. These range from smaller sites such as at Kinloss Golf Club to much larger longer term growth areas such as at Elgin South, Buckie South, and Findrassie. For these larger growth areas, the masterplan approach ensured that the principles of good placemaking were embedded from the outset and that all required infrastructure could be identified from the start. This allowed space for facilities such as shops, community facilities, and schools to be provided from the outset which supports the principle of local living and creating walkable neighbourhoods. Having these principles embedded within masterplans allows them to be delivered through the QA process at the Development Management stage.

Moray Council Supporting Document for Policy PP1 Placemaking

A number of representations challenged the level of detail provided in PP1 at the proposed plan stage. In response, Officers prepared a supporting document showing how the policy sought to improve the standards of urban design. The paper clearly demonstrated how the policy incorporated and met the aspirations and aims of several key policy documents ranging from Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), Designing Streets, Scottish Government Place Principle and Scottish Government/COSLA Public Health Priorities for Scotland. Showing how these strategies were embedded into the placemaking policy were key so that the wide-ranging benefits that placemaking can bring would be delivered in a Moray context.

This paper also highlighted design issues that were specifically related to Moray as evidence to justify the more detailed and tailored policy approach of PP1. As has been explained good design can play a significant role in improving both physical and mental health and therefore it was a fundamental element of the policy. The policy sought to deliver these benefits through creating places with character and identity and addressing some key issues that were identified as being specific to Moray. As highlighted in the table below, the placemaking policy has delivered significant improvements on a number of areas which has knock on wider benefits for residents and wider society. Ensuring that these design issues are addressed so that the benefits were delivered could only have been achieved through the clarity provided from the detailed policy and QA process.

As this schedule will conclude, PP1 is already considered be delivering the outcomes of NPF4 Policy 14 Design, quality and place. Given that it also incorporates wider policy strategies there is sound and considerable evidence to justify continuing with tailored approach to Placemaking in the next LDP.

Quality Audit (QA)

MLDP 2015

To support Moray Council's desire to improve the standards of Placemaking a QA process was introduced to assess Planning Applications against the Placemaking Policy. This was first introduced in 2015 in support of the MLDP 2015 Placemaking (PP3) Policy. Officers tested and trialled the Scottish Government's Place Standard tool to assess proposals as well as the CABI Building for life tool as it was felt this was more suited for housebuilders. However, the Place Standard was deemed to be more suited to community planning and a tool more tailored to the planning application process was required to achieve the desired improvements to layouts from an urban design perspective.

Officers from Strategic Planning and Development devised their own bespoke tool that used a traffic light system to assess proposals against the placemaking policy criteria. This tool focused more on the key Urban Design principles within the policy, but it looked at urban design holistically and encapsulated other policies such as open space and biodiversity for example.

The initial QA assessed proposals against 12 key urban design criteria including connections, character and identity, open space, and landscaping. The QA took a multi-disciplinary approach to assessing proposals and facilitated joint working and shared learning between services. Led by Officers from Strategic Planning and Development the placemaking qualities of proposals were assessed by Officers from Transportation Services, Flood Risk Management, Housing Services, NatureScot, NHS Grampian, and Development Management.

The initial QA operated a traffic light system where proposals were marked "red" where it failed to meet the policy criteria, "amber" where it complied with the policy, but the design could be improved, and "green" where the proposal was deemed to fully comply. Where a design category was not deemed to comply with policy clear mitigation would be passed to the applicant as to what they need to achieve to fully comply.

In recognition, the QA was the subject of a Scottish Award for Quality in Planning (SAQP) in 2018 as an example of best practice and has generated significant interest from other planning authorities and has been replicated elsewhere.

MLDP 2020

The QA process was revised to reflect MLDP 2020 Primary Policy (PP1) Placemaking. This Policy was more detailed and went further than the previous policy by looking all of the key elements that fall under the good Placemaking holistically. While certain design elements such as Biodiversity, Open Space, Trees and Woodland, Active Travel for example all had their own individual policies in the MLDP, they were also included within PP1 and the revised QA. This was to recognise the importance that these issues are to creating successful places and so that they could be looked at as part of the wider placemaking

assessment. These key placemaking elements are all recognised in the 6 qualities of successful place in NPF4 Policy 14 Design, quality, and place.

While preparing the MLDP 2020, Monitoring Reports at the time highlighted that several applications were scoring a high number of “ambers” which was deemed to be excessive and meant that higher standards could potentially be achieved. One notable change to the QA in support of PP1 was the removal of the “amber” category so that proposals were either deemed to comply or not with policy. This removed an ambiguous element of the QA where a proposal could be deemed to comply with policy but not meet the highest standards that the Council felt could be achieved. In conjunction with Planning Policy Guidance that was prepared by Officers from Strategic Planning & Development, this was deemed to not only push for better designs but also to provide clarity to developers as to what was expected.

In 2020 Officers attended the Local Authority Urban Design Forum (LAUDF) where the QA process featured as a discussion topic and has been used as case study by Architecture & Design Scotland about how the process embodies the place principle to assess the place quality of developments. The LAUDF allowed Officers to share experiences with other professionals on assessing the placemaking qualities of proposals.

NPF4 – Policy 14 Design, quality and place, Annex D

NPF4 Policy 14 Design, quality and place aligns with the aims of the current MLDP 2020 and the two placemaking policies are not in conflict with each other. As stated, PP1 Placemaking already has the 6 qualities of a successful place from SPP embedded into it and has been delivering those design outcomes over the MLDP 2015 and 2020 plan periods. However, PP1 Placemaking goes into more detail than Policy 14 on specific issues relating to Moray providing clarity to both Officers and applicants as to what is required.

As has been demonstrated there is significant evidence showing that the current more detailed policy approach of the MLDP 2020 is delivering the aspirations of NPF4 in a Moray context. However, PP1 Placemaking goes into more detail than Policy 14 on specific issues relating to Moray providing clarity to both Officers and applicants as to what is required. Having these clear, concise, and unambiguous policy criteria (supplemented by guidance) has been essential in helping to deliver the aspirations for productive, sustainable, and liveable places.

Given that NPF4 now forms part of the Moray ‘development plan’ the QA has been reformatted to align with the 6 qualities of a successful place and Annex D. The QA update streamlines the assessment of the design quality of development proposals against the relevant development plan policies clearly and consistently and NPF4 via one collective process and provides further clarity of the interpretation of the 6 qualities of a successful place set out in NPF4 in a Moray context. This approach not only ensures that proposals comply with the current MLDP policy but also the aspirations of NPF4 and Policy 14 Design, quality and place to create well designed and successful places.

The two iterations of the Placemaking Policy and QA’s have deemed have been successful in delivering high quality developments and which is reflected in the 2019, 2021, and 2023 Monitoring Reports where trends and observations were monitored (see below). As the aims of NPF4 and the desire of Moray Council to continue to improve Placemaking are aligned there is significant and strong evidence to justify the continuation of a tailored approach to placemaking in Moray. In conjunction with the QA this will ensure that NPF4 Policies are met as well as the continuing the positive outcomes that have been achieved through the previous MLDP placemaking policies.

Moray Council Planning Policy Guidance

Planning Policy Guidance was approved by Moray Council in support of the MLDP 2020. The guidance covered a number of topic areas including Placemaking and provides clarification on policy requirements for developers as well as helping assess proposals through the QA process.

The following is a summary of some key design areas which the guidance covers which are relevant to the interpretation of the Placemaking Policy:

- **Parking** – The issue of streets and developments being visually dominated by parked cars is a long-standing issue. The removal of cars from streets brings many benefits in terms of making streets more visually attractive, encourage social interaction, increased natural surveillance, and increasing biodiversity as more space is left for gardens and boundary treatments. The guidance provides clarity on section (vi) Parking of PP1 and provides examples of what types of arrangements are deemed acceptable.
- **Placemaking Statement** – Further detail and a template as to what type of information is required to be submitted. This covers a number of key design areas with examples of good practice to help applicant achieve green in the QA.
- **Landscaping** – Detail of what type of species will be acceptable in developments. Provides information relating to what species will support biodiversity and provide seasonal colour and pollination opportunities.
- **Biodiversity** – Applicants must provide biodiversity statements which must be a standalone document. The guidance provides information as to what is expected and what must be demonstrated by applicants.
- **Safe Environments** – Detail on how layouts can be safe and welcoming by designing out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. For example, having public fronts and private backs, the use of “turn a corner building” on key plots, and ensuring that all paths and areas of open space are overlooked with good natural surveillance. Good lighting will also play an important role in addition to natural surveillance to create safe spaces, particularly in the darker months.
- **Inclusive and Accessible Play** - Play areas in new developments must be inclusive and accessible, providing children and young people of different abilities with equal access to high quality social and play provision. The guidance provides clarity as to what exactly is expected to be provided with a park hierarchy setting out how many pieces of equipment must be provided including inclusive, non-inclusive and wheelchair specifications. The next LDP will continue to seek to ensure that all open and green spaces including allotments are fully accessible for all users.

Key Trends, Delivered Improvements, & Benefits

The 2019, 2021, and 2023 Monitoring Reports contain updates as to how both the MLDP 2015 and 2020 Placemaking policies have improved standards of urban design. The placemaking principles contained within these policies has also successfully been integrated into several adopted masterplans such as Elgin South, Findrassie, Dallas Dhu, Bilbohall, and Buckie South. Having these key placemaking principles embodied into masterplans ensures that high quality developments in line with the MLDP are delivered at the planning application stage.

While every planning application is site specific there have been some common areas that have seen significant improvements since the introduction of the placemaking policies and QA process. The following table provides a summary of some of the key trends and observations highlighted in the Monitoring Reports that demonstrate how the policies are improving layouts ensuring that they are delivering the outcomes of NPF4 Policy 14 Design, quality and place, the 6 Qualities of a Successful Place, and PP1 Placemaking.

Design Category	Key Improvements	Benefits
Character & Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placemaking statements are submitted with all applications over 10 units. 	A number of wide-ranging benefits are being delivered as an outcome

	<p>Officers have ensured that these provide a thorough townscape analysis to ensure that the development is reflective of the location in terms of street pattern, architectural details, landscaping, natural features/topography etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of CGI/3D visualisations to aide assessment. • Greater differentiation between different character areas is now being achieved that goes beyond different house types. This includes variation between renders, street materials, landscape/planting, and architectural details. • Introduction of key buildings that are different from other buildings in the development. 	<p>of the improvements to these key design areas. These could only have been achieved through the detailed nature of PP1 Placemaking. As a result, well designed places benefit residents and communities through the creation of safe and welcoming environments which has knock on benefits for mental health and well-being. The following are a summary of some of the key benefits attributed to improving these key design areas as a result of PP1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-designed developments that are reflective of their surroundings and promote a “sense of place” are beneficial for mental health and wellbeing of residents. 	
Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Layouts are permeable and legible. Long cul de sacs are not accepted. • Safe and well overlooked connections (including active travel) are provided to support healthy lifestyles. • Active travel infrastructure such as bike lockers and shelters are provided in every development to encourage active travel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significant reduction in streets being visually dominated by parked cars helps to create more attractive streets that prioritise people over cars. It also helps to encourage social interaction and biodiversity by increasing the size of front gardens. This also helps to create the perception that streets are designed for people and not cars and therefore walking is encouraged. Creating opportunities for social interaction is a key component of good design and creating healthy and inclusive communities. 	
Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant reduction in areas classed as being “leftover”. All proposals must comply with the quantitative and qualitative aspect of Policy EP5 as well as PP1. • Open spaces have clear multi-functional benefits such as providing play areas, seating areas, blue/green habitats, and food growing opportunities so that they are inclusive and encourage social interaction. For example, this has been achieved through raised beds. • Delivery of high-quality play areas and open space are inclusive and accessible. This ensures that at least 50% of play equipment provided in play areas is to inclusive standards and integrated throughout the layout. • All open spaces are planted with a variety of species including shrubs, fruit trees, and woodland planting to create attractive spaces with seasonal variation that supports and enhances biodiversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-connected routes that support active travel seek to prioritise cycling and walking over the car improving physical and mental health as well as addressing climate change. • Health and well-being is supported through the provision of high quality multi-functional open space. Seating areas provide opportunities for rest, 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of blue infrastructure has increased significantly as there is a desire to move away from large single SUDs ponds. Rain gardens and planted swales are now common features in layouts. 	<p>social interaction, and inter-generational mixing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play areas that are accessible and inclusive for support the delivery of healthy vibrant and inclusive communities. • Increased and varied planting across development not only supports biodiversity and links to nature networks but also helps to improve the mental wellbeing of residents. • Food growing opportunities such as raised beds or food growing trees shrubs provide and encourage social interaction within communities. However, the next LDP will need to ensure that these are fully accessible ie are designed for wheelchair users and are waist high. • Well-designed neighbourhoods and open space are designed to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour by providing spaces that benefit from natural surveillance.
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable and accessible housing integrated into developments and on the same street to promote community cohesion and inclusivity. • Continue to promote “tenure blind” affordable housing so that there is no differentiation between private and affordable housing. 	
Car Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The visual dominance of parked cars in developments is a recurring and longstanding problem that was identified in previous Monitoring Reports. Streets that are visually dominated with parked cars are visually unattractive, limit opportunities for social interaction, reduce garden size and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, and create the perception that streets are for cars and not people. • The requirement for 50% of parking on all streets to be behind the building line has seen significant improvements made to the character of streets as they are less visually dominated by parked cars. • Parking plans are now being provided by applicants showing how the layout complies with policy as well as allowing an easier assessment to be undertaken. 	
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standard and quality of landscaping plans has improved which reflects the importance that landscaping can have on the character of a development. Recently approved landscape plans provide details relating to numbers, species, height and girth of trees, as well as providing seasonal variation and food growing opportunities. As such the conditioning of landscape plans is now no longer acceptable. 	
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity plans must be submitted as an individual document demonstrating how proposals support and enhance biodiversity. Simply providing a landscape plan is not accepted. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of features such as bat boxes, hedgehog highways and a greater variation of plants, shrubs, and trees all provide greater seasonal variation and pollination opportunities are all now standard in developments. • The continued integration of blue infrastructure through swales and rain gardens are becoming standard design features and not only improve the visual appearance of developments but also improve and support biodiversity. 	
Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the adoption of the MLDP 2020 all developments must include public art. This not only brings an attractive element to developments, but it also helps to enforce the sense of character and identity. The additional planning policy guidance that was prepared seeks to provide clarity and help developers understand what is expected. 	

While only a summary of some of the key placemaking outcomes that have delivered, these could only have been achieved through the strong and clear policy framework that clearly sets out what is expected to deliver successful places.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods

NPF4 requires LDP's to support local living through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs, and masterplans. Separate schedules covering Local Living and Infrastructure have been prepared providing further detail and discussion on these areas.

Placemaking will play a fundamental role in delivering this aspiration whether through individual planning applications or wider masterplans. A number of masterplans have been prepared such as Findrassie, Elgin South, and Buckie South which sought to create walkable mixed-use neighbourhoods which support the aspirations of local living. These masterplans have had the policy principles of PP1 embedded into them and in conjunction with the QA this is ensuring that these are delivered on the ground.

Active Travel

The Council's Active Travel Strategy 2022 – 2027 aims to build on the increase in walking and cycling in Moray over the next five years. The plan embeds the ethos that Active Travel has many benefits to both communities and individuals and has a number of positive outcomes for public health, social inclusion, reducing the environmental impact of transport and for supporting local economic activity. National priorities of walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport over single occupancy car use, will be embedded in Council decision making to address any challenges and achieve key priorities. The Active Travel Strategy Annual Update 2023 provides an update on the progress that has been made as well as a programme of schemes for the next 5 years. Schedule 10 b Transport has been prepared covering in detail how the next LDP will consider sustainable travel issues.

Placemaking will play an important role in delivering the aspirations of the strategy in new developments. Not only in terms of creating safe routes and streets are that are designed to encourage walking and

cycling over the use of the private car also through the provision of the necessary infrastructure to encourage behavioural change. These aspects are all required to deliver walkable 20-minute neighbourhoods.

As with the with the placemaking principles of PP1, this key element has been built into existing masterplans such as Findrassie, Elgin South, and the Elgin City Centre masterplan. Any tailored approach to placemaking that is considered will need to continue to support this strategy and be embedded within it.

Moray Council Open Space Strategy

The Moray Council's Open Space Strategy was prepared in 2018 and provides a strategic vision for the provision, development, maintenance and management of open space within Moray. High quality open space is a fundamental element of good placemaking and can help to create places with character, identity and sense of place contributing to quality of life. Open space can also ensure new development fits into the natural environment and landscape.

The strategy provides a detailed audit of open space in seven settlements in Moray and influenced what types of open space were required on new sites in the MLDP 2020. It will also be important to create places and open spaces that are inclusive and accessible for all users. The updated Open Space Strategy will play a key role in providing the evidence base for delivering high quality multi-functional open space in the MLDP 2027. Should tailored approach for open space be included in the MLDP 2027 then this will be required to be reflected in the placemaking local policy and the QA.

The Public Health Scotland Strategic Plan 2022 – 2023

This strategy sets out objectives to improve the nation's health and placemaking and the place-based approach to planning will play a key role in delivering these desired outcomes. PP1 recognises the benefits that placemaking can have on the populations health and was influenced by the Mood, Mobility and Place project. Given the importance that placemaking will place in delivering these key outcomes, improving the physical and mental well-being of the population will continue to be embedded into the MLDP 2027 and any tailored approach to placemaking that could be considered.

Moray Council Climate Change Strategy

Climate Change Strategy which, together with the MLDP, is designed to provide a co-ordinated and appropriate response to help all with Moray to deal with the challenges that climate change is expected to bring. On the 27 June 2019, Moray Council declared a Climate Change Emergency. It was agreed that a Climate Change Strategy and action plan would be prepared and adopted with the aim of Moray Council becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Further that the Council would work with the wider community to promote and facilitate local action on Climate Change.

NPF4 places tackling the Climate Emergency at the forefront and the planning system and good placemaking will play an important role in addressing this issue to build sustainable and resilient communities. Placemaking can help tackle some of these issue by creating communities that encourage healthy lifestyles by providing good active travel networks, supporting and enhancing biodiversity, and creating successful mixed-use neighbourhoods to reduce car dependency. Delivering these outcomes will be incorporated into the MLDP 2027 and any tailored approach to placemaking that could be considered.

Moray Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2021 – 2023

In addition to tackling the Climate Emergency, NPF4 and Moray Council also recognise the importance of tackling the nature crisis through both NPF4 and the MLDP which both contain policies to protect and enhance biodiversity. The Council is undertaking a range of work to embed the urgency of reversing

biodiversity loss and restoring nature and the next MLDP will facilitate the creation and conservation of a Nature Network to support connectivity between protected areas and between urban-rural areas.

The MLDP 2020 Placemaking Policy PP1 already acknowledged the importance of supporting and enhancing biodiversity and had its own individual policy and section within PP1. This work is currently ongoing and the next MLDP any tailored approach to Placemaking will need to take cognisance of this work to deliver these key policy outcomes. A separate schedule has been prepared covering the next LDP will address key issues relating to biodiversity.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

NHS Grampian

Moray Council Senior Engineer (Transportation) – Comments received have been included within the schedule.

Lead Public Health Officer – Moray Council Environmental Health - Comments received have been included within the schedule.

Moray Council Flood Risk Management Team – agreed the summary of evidence.

NatureScot- Suggested adding Designing Streets to the evidence. Moray Council considers this to be policy context rather than evidence.

SEPA – No comments but note the links to Schedule 2 Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

Based on the evidence and local knowledge accumulated over the previous two plan periods the proposed plan will:

- Consider preparing a tailored approach to Placemaking and the QA to deliver the policy outcomes and policy aspiration of NPF4.
- Update placemaking guidance in line with any tailored approach.
- The new LDP should consider place-based opportunities for new development sites and incorporate outcomes from other strategies and evidence to support the Local Living principle. This should include early engagement with communities and key stakeholders.
- Consider key design principles and/or development briefs on key sites to support a tailored approach.
- Consider future masterplan requirements for longer term growth areas.
- The new LDP should create places and spaces that are inclusive, are accessible for all, and are safe by being designed to reduce antisocial behaviour. Early engagement with communities and key stakeholders will inform this approach.

Statements of Agreement

Nature Scot suggested adding Designing Streets to the evidence. Moray Council considers this to be policy context rather than evidence.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	7. Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Section 15(5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district. Section 15(2A) • a statement of the planning authority’s policies and proposals as to the provision of public conveniences. Section 15(2B) • a statement of the planning authority’s policies and proposals as to the provision of water refill locations.
Links to Evidence	<p>CD079 Scottish Government - Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhood - draft planning guidance</p> <p>CD080 Climate Exchange - 20-minute neighbourhoods in a Scottish context</p> <p>CD081 Our Place - 20 Minute Neighbourhoods (website)</p> <p>CD082 HITRANS SUSTRANS - 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands</p> <p>CD078 Moray Council Active Travel Strategy 2022 - 2027</p> <p>CD076 Transport Scotland - Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland - A route map to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030</p> <p>CD083 Bilbohall Strategic Masterplan</p> <p>CD084 Buckie South Masterplan</p> <p>CD085 Dallas Dhu Masterplan</p> <p>CD086 Elgin South Masterplan</p> <p>CD087 Findrassie Masterplan</p> <p>CD088 Elgin City Centre Masterplan 2021</p> <p>CD089 Aberlour Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD090 Buckie Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD091 Dufftown Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD092 Forres Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD093 Keith Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD094 Lossiemouth Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>Moray Council Schedules – evidence is referenced throughout this schedule that links to other schedules.</p>
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context	
<p>NPF4 includes a specific policy on Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods, although it is recognised that this is a cross cutting policy, and a number of other areas will contribute to this policy requirement.</p> <p>The policy aims to ‘To encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the Place Principle and create connected and compact neighbourhoods where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by walking, wheeling or cycling or using sustainable transport options’.</p> <p>This is further qualified; ‘LDPs should support local living, including 20-minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. The approach should take into account the local context, consider the varying settlement patterns and reflect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place. Communities and businesses will have an important role to play in informing this, helping to strengthen local living through their engagement with the planning system.’</p>	

Policy 15 also provides a list of criteria that should be considered when determining planning proposals. This suggests elements to consider to ensure that proposal will contribute to local living. This includes local access, but is not limited to;

- sustainable modes of transport including local public transport and safe, high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling networks;
- employment;
- shopping;
- health and social care facilities;
- childcare, schools and lifelong learning opportunities;
- playgrounds and informal play opportunities, parks, green streets and spaces, community gardens, opportunities for food growth and allotments, sport and recreation facilities;
- publicly accessible toilets;
- affordable and accessible housing options, ability to age in place and housing diversity.

The above criteria will provide a framework to explore Local Living and through mapping, a methodology can be developed to deliver Local Living across Moray.

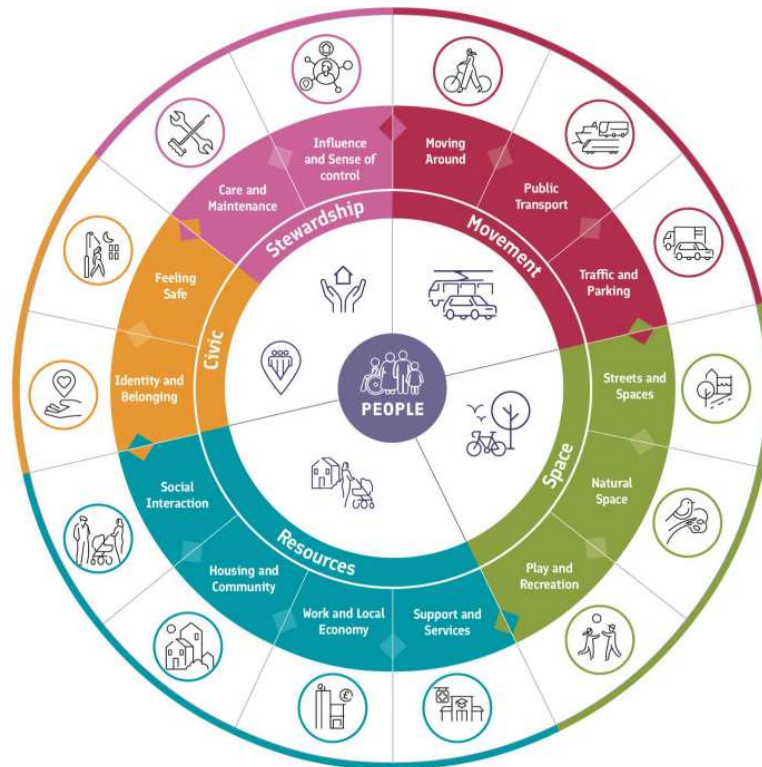
Summary of Evidence

Introduction

Local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods represent a positive step towards creating liveable and sustainable communities including improvements to health and wellbeing, reducing inequalities and adapting to climate changes. Furthermore, by reducing the need for people to drive and providing services within a walkable catchment, this promotes physical activity, contributing to improved health and a healthier environment overall.

The Scottish Government draft Planning Guidance on Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods states that 'The Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhood concepts aim to create places where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, by walking, wheeling or cycling'. This further outlines the benefits of this approach by highlighting the positive effect on the climate and the environment, health and wellbeing, the local economy and quality of life.

The draft Planning Guidance sets out a Framework with 14 key themes in order to fully consider all the key elements of Local Living;



Developing a local living methodology for Moray involves creating a sustainable and community-focused approach to living that considers the unique challenges and opportunities of urban and rural areas. The successful delivery of local living across Moray cuts across a number of policy areas, with the local living principal drawing all of these elements together. Evidence has been gathered through several corresponding schedules, and this information and outcomes will form the basis of the Moray local living approach.

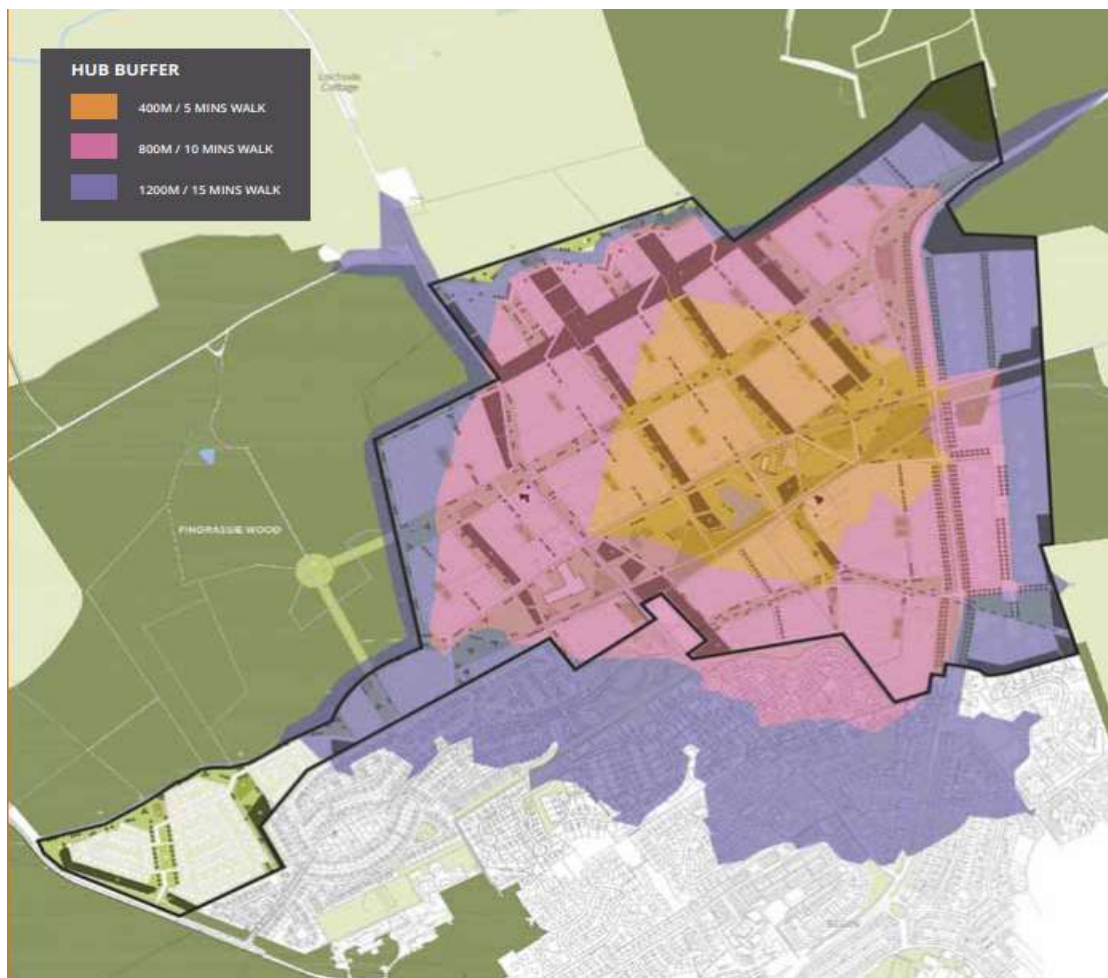
The concept of local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods is not limited to urban areas, and it can also be applied to rural communities. Rural communities can benefit greatly from this concept by creating more sustainable and liveable communities that meet the needs of their residents. However, it is likely that local living needs to adapt to rural areas within Moray due to the existing settlement patterns and the need to resource share.

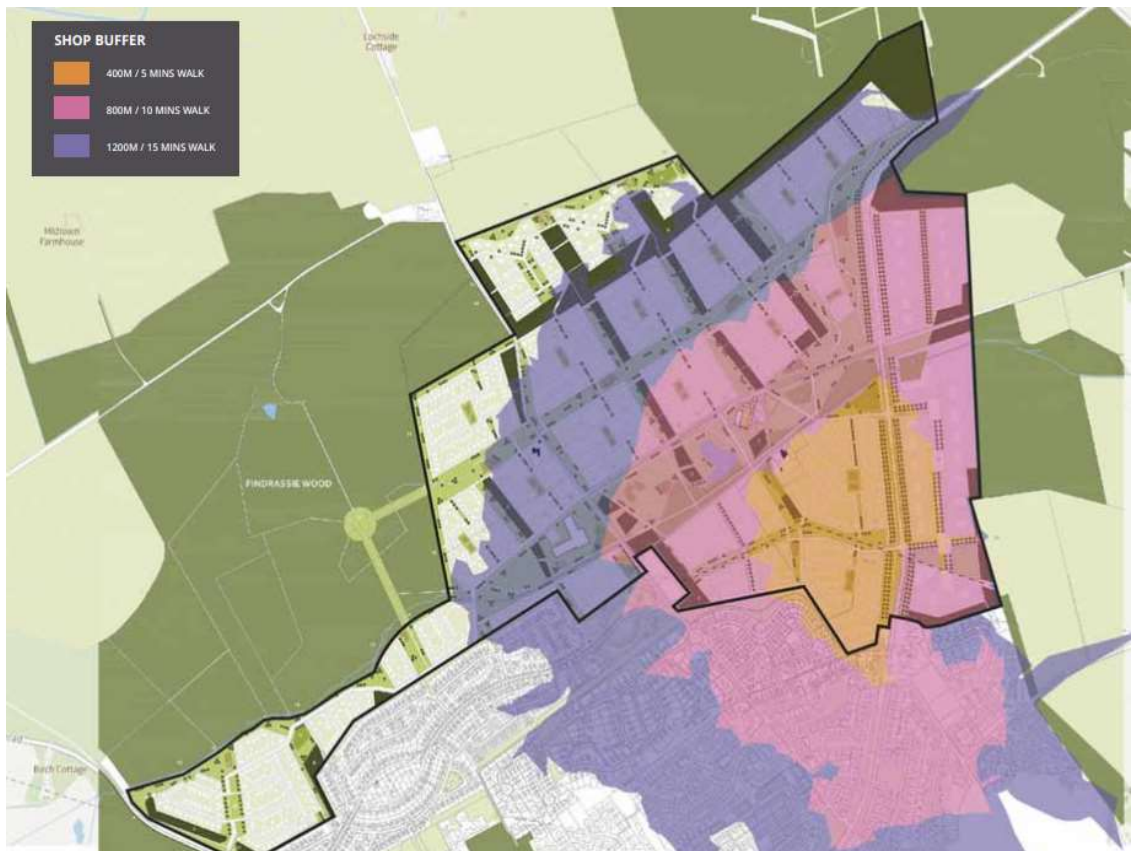
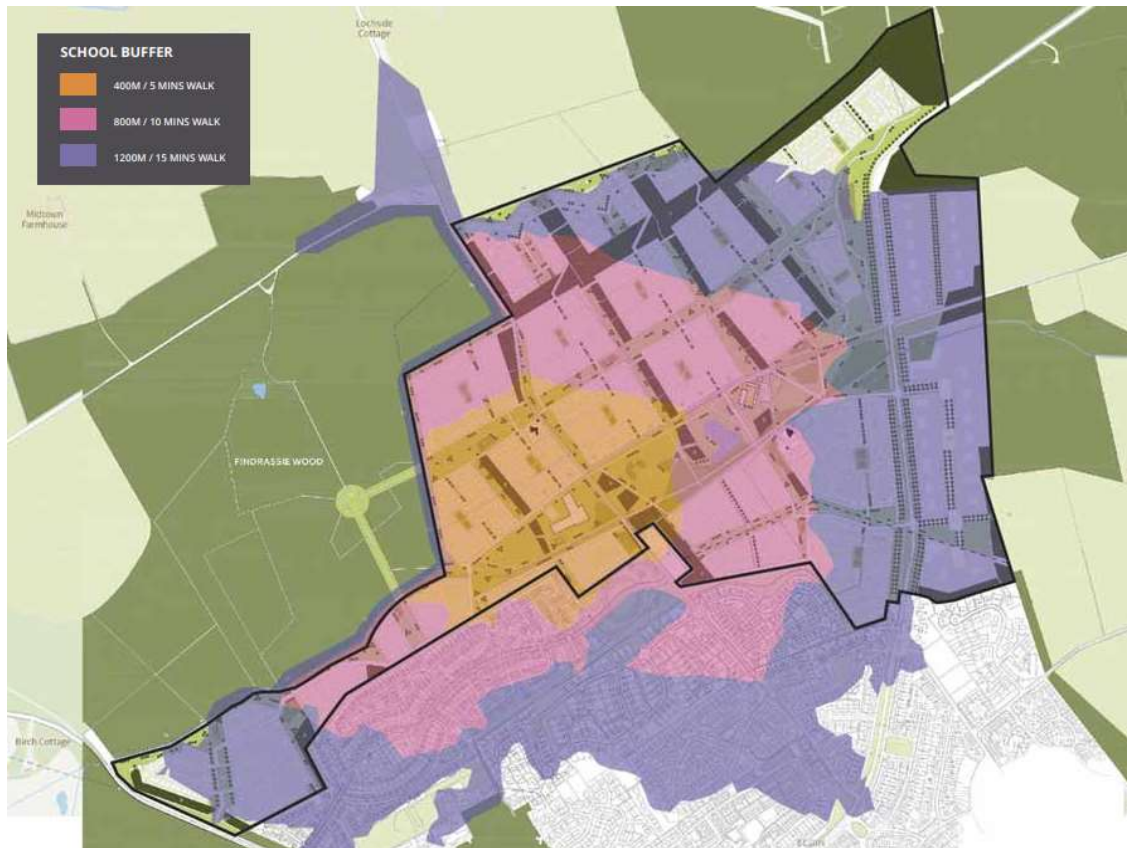
The approach to Local Living will vary across Moray as there is a mix of communities, across both urban and rural areas. It is recognised that a largely rural area like Moray will be looking towards Local Living as a collective rather than 20-minute neighbourhoods. However, there will be places that the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods can be delivered, for example in existing settlements or new larger developments. Therefore, a variable approach will be required to deliver Local Living, for example looking holistically at rural settlements and the need to cluster services. This approach will allow for gaps to be identified regarding service provision to meet Local Living key requirements.

There are already several existing examples of Local Living areas across Moray. Adopted masterplans, including Elgin, Forres and Buckie include visions for more pedestrian-friendly and sustainable communities, that are designed around the needs of people, rather than cars. This includes the development of more cycle and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, the promotion of public transport, and the creation of mixed-use developments that include housing, retail, and community services. New larger developments will include integrated services and other facilities and may also include links to existing services in the surrounding areas. One example of linking new development to existing services is the delivery of new sustainable travel routes, this is often delivered by the appropriate developer. Larger scale projects, that may involve multiple developers could be delivered through the gathering of developer contributions.

This approach will also allow us to identify gaps in existing neighbourhoods and ensure people can access their daily needs in their local communities. These gaps will be identified through mapping existing services and facilities and identify what is the most appropriate mechanisms to address these. The mapping will address both new developments and existing neighbourhoods. This will need to take different approaches depending on the settlement or rural area.

In addition to the town centres, new developments in settlements have also been working to promote and create 20-minute neighbourhoods in new residential areas. For example, Elgin has developed to the north and south, and this has promoted Local Living, aiming to transform new developments into a more vibrant and connected communities by improving public spaces, embedding community services, and enhancing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. This has also been reflected in new development in Forres and Buckie. The local living concept has been integrated into new developments across a number of settlements and this is evidenced through adopted masterplans and development briefs. An example of this approach within Moray is the Findrassie Masterplan, which contains details on Local Living within a new, large-scale development. The following plans show three examples of community facilities: community hub, school and shops, and the walking distance from these hubs. It is also recognised in these plans that new facilities can also serve existing residential areas as well. This model can be replicated across other towns in Moray with a tailored approach for individual settlements.



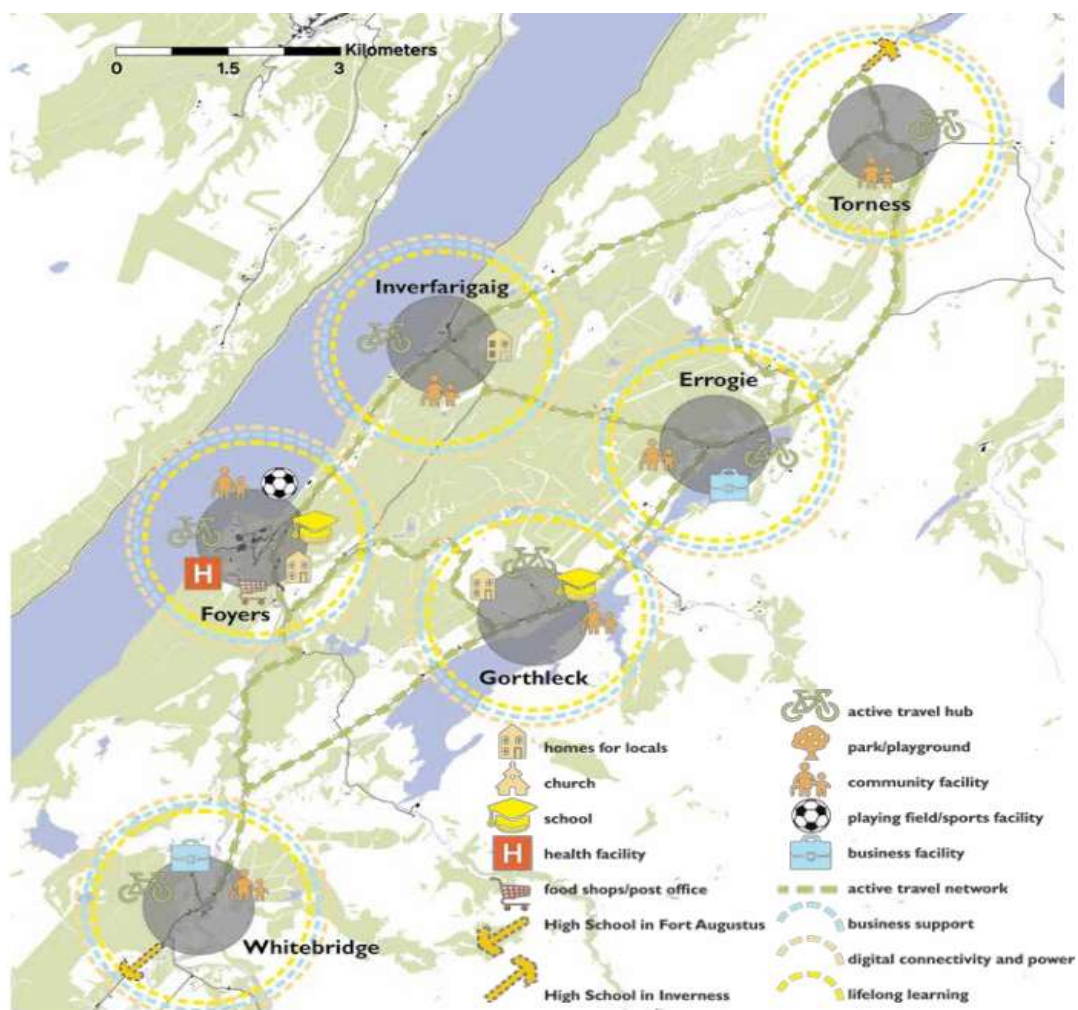


This approach has also been incorporated in Town Centre Improvement Plans for a number of settlements (Aberlour, Buckie, Dufftown, Forres, Keith, and Lossiemouth) across Moray. The Town

Centre Improvement Plans show a number of key projects that will aid in delivering Local Living; many of these plans are now being delivered and improvements are being developed to support Local Living.

Moray Council has been working to plan for new facilities within settlements through the possible acquisition of funding for a number of town centre projects. This includes the development of new facilities as well as the renovation of existing facilities to make them more accessible and welcoming. Overall, efforts to create Local Living neighbourhoods are a positive step towards creating a more sustainable and liveable community. By promoting sustainable travel, creating more accessible and connected neighbourhoods, and investing in community facilities, Moray is creating towns and rural areas that is starting to deliver key elements of Local Living.

Rural areas in Moray are diverse and scattered communities that includes a mix of small towns and villages, as well as remote and sparsely populated areas. To create more sustainable and liveable communities in this area, a new approach, as discussed below, will need to be undertaken to encompass different groupings and wider areas. This may not meet the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods but should meet the requirements of local living in a rural context. The report [Living Well Locally - 20 Minute Communities in the Highlands and Islands](#), provides a number of good examples of how Local Living can be delivered across scattered rural communities. This approach would suit rural communities within Moray in terms of shared resources and services. The following is an example of Local Living across Foyers and Stratherrick, which has similar characteristics to areas of Moray;



One of the main challenges facing Moray is the lack of public transport options. Within settlements there is considerable provision for walking and cycling and there are some existing inter settlement routes, however there is recognition that there are gaps in the network. To address this issue, the Moray Active Travel Strategy is continuing to develop more accessible and connected walking and cycling

routes, as well as the initiation of demand led transport, specifically m.connect in Moray, part of the Moray Growth Deal Project. There are also existing sustainable travel options through Moray Council School Transport Services. Furthermore, there are promoted programmes through Moray Councils Active Travel behaviour change initiatives that support active travel provision in rural areas. By improving these modes of transportation, residents of rural areas may be able to access essential services and amenities more easily and reduce their reliance on private vehicles.

In addition to transportation, Moray Council with community partners is also working to develop a more diverse and integrated mix of services and amenities within its communities, for example through various funding streams Moray Council is developing a number of projects with cross sector support. This includes the development of community facilities as well as the promotion of local businesses and services. By creating more accessible and integrated services and amenities, the rural areas can create more sustainable and liveable communities that meet the needs of its residents. Furthermore, this can help to create a stronger sense of community and social cohesion, as residents are able to connect more easily and engage in local initiatives.

In conclusion, the concept of local living is not limited to urban areas, and it can be applied to rural communities as well, although noting that specific solutions are required. By improving transportation options and developing more integrated services, including digital connections, and amenities, Moray communities can create more sustainable and liveable communities that meet the needs of their residents.

The Moray Approach

Creating local living neighbourhoods in Moray, and therefore addressing the policy requirements in NPF4 will require a new approach with an increased emphasis on accessibility, sustainability, and inclusivity. The approach encompasses a multi-faceted strategy, addressing infrastructure, climate change and adaptation, mixed developments, green spaces, public transportation, and community engagement to create a holistic and resilient urban environment going forward.

It is worth noting that there is significant crossover with Schedule 6 Placemaking and Schedule 11 Infrastructure. Both schedules contain significant evidence to deliver the local living approach detailed below. As discussed below many of the key elements of local living are an amalgamation of other policy areas.

The key principles and how this could be delivered in Moray is as follows;

1. Community Engagement:

- Involve residents, community groups, and stakeholders in the planning process. Significant information from community groups and stakeholders has already been gathered, through dedicated public events, schools' engagement (Elgin Academy, Speyside High and Seafield Primary School) and will input to the process of developing the next Local Development Plan. A number of local communities are already drafting local place plans to feed into the local development plan process. Furthermore, additional opportunities will be presented to communities through the preparation of the forthcoming Local Development Plan, the continued development of Local Place Plans, and the identification of land use planning issues contained within Community Plans to align with the Local Development Plan. There will be further public consultation events and consultation with the community councils and other groups through the LDP process. The timeline for this has not been established, however the Development Plan Scheme gives an overview of the consultation periods.

2. Local Economy:

- Provide opportunities for economic development and support small businesses to strengthen the local economy through a collaborative approach with stakeholders, for example Business Gateway and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

- Ensure that there is sufficient employment land allocated within the Local Development Plan to allow business to thrive in the right places.
- Allow a flexible approach to mixed used sites to ensure opportunities are available for local business.
- Schedule 13 Business and Industry and Schedule 14 Town Centres and Retail provides evidence of the existing situation across Moray. These provide specific evidence on settlements across Moray, including data on existing patterns, town centre health checks, strategies regarding town centre improvements. This data will be used to direct retail and business development opportunities through land allocations to support Local Living opportunities in the forthcoming LDP.
- Furthermore, the Community Wealth Building Strategy will ensure that economic activity is retained within the Moray area, when appropriate.

3. Education and Skills Development:

- Invest in education and skills training, through partnership working, to provide residents with the tools they need to support business development and retention of skills in Moray. This will be delivered through cross sector working with the wider educational sector including Moray Council Education and the further/higher education sector i.e. UHI.
- Moray Council will help to enhance local economies through the delivery of the Community Wealth Building Strategy and ensuring that employment and businesses are provided opportunities in the right places to support development.
- Schedule 10 Infrastructure provides evidence of education and learning including school education and further education. The evidence, represented through mapping, has established existing education provision within settlements and the need for future support through development. This information has been informed, amongst other items, by Moray Council Learning Estate Strategy 2022-32, Moray Council Housing Land Audit, Moray Council School Roll Forecasts 2022. This data will be used to support schools through residential allocations in appropriate communities.

4. Housing and Infrastructure:

- Ensure the availability of housing including affordable and accessible housing in the right place to support settlements.
- Allocate housing sites across Moray to ensure settlements and services can be supported and people have choice including affordability at all levels.
- Invest in infrastructure to ensure local living can be a success including active travel links, digital connectivity.
- The Moray Local Development Plan will provide a range of housing sites including the integration of affordable options. There are a number of schedules that provide specific details on this – Schedule 8 Housing Land and Specialist Housing; and Schedule 10 Infrastructure. The evidence, represented through mapping, has established existing development sites including housing and identified infrastructure requirements within settlements and the need for future development. This information has been informed by plans by Moray Housing Land Audit the LDP Delivery Group. Housing and infrastructure are key requirements of local living and the delivery of both will be fundamental to achieving the aims of local living. This data will be used to develop new communities and promote housing and infrastructure to support existing communities through allocations in the forthcoming LDP.

5. Healthcare and Social Services:

- Secure access to healthcare facilities and related services within community settings, where possible, through cross sector working with NHS Grampian.
- Work with healthcare providers to allow for the development of flexible health services and mobile healthcare by providing community spaces for service delivery. These multifunctional spaces could accommodate a variety of community uses and span a number of settlements. In Moray this will be recognised by enabling people to access services within their locality.
- Schedule 10 Infrastructure contains significant evidence on Healthcare provision across Moray. The evidence, represented through mapping, has established existing health provision within settlements and the need for future development. This information has been informed by plans by NHS Grampian and Moray HSCP. As noted, the rural settlements and areas with Moray may require to adopt shared services, this is pertinent in this element of local living. In order to address this issue, further exploration of sustainable transport links between residents and shared services may be required.
- The data will be used to assess gaps in provision and plan accordingly and/or examine possible connections to allow suitable access to health services.

6. Environmental Enhancement:

- Promote responsible land use, conservation, and access to open space and play opportunities. Improve openspace and play provision within settlements and ensure that these areas are appropriately located and accessible. Any gaps in provision, highlighted in the Open Space Strategy and Play Sufficiency Assessment should be addressed through improvement opportunities.
- Environmental enhancements, including improvements in greenspace, spanning rural and urban area will address a number of key issues, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity loss, flooding. The development of a Moray wide Nature Network will provide the basis for strategic environmental improvements.
- Further detail is included in other schedules that directly address a number of these issues – Schedule 1 Climate Change; Schedule 2 Biodiversity, Natural Spaces & Blue and Green Infrastructure; and Schedule 3 Forestry, Woodland & Trees. The evidence, represented through mapping, has established existing environmental designations, open spaces, play sufficiency within settlements and across Moray. This will also highlight gaps in provision and the need for future development. This information has been informed by the Moray Biodiversity Study, Open Space Audit and the Play Sufficiency Audit.

7. Transportation and Connectivity:

- Improve rural transportation networks, including public transport and walking and cycling opportunities.
- Continued provision of behaviour change programmes including training on cycle use.
- Recognise the need for the continued use of private vehicles in some communities.
- Identifying sustainable travel links through settlements and creating opportunities to link resources within rural areas, while recognising the constraints of delivery of inter settlement routes. This will allow for non-motorised travel to enable access to daily needs, while also recognising the need to provide for parking provision within settlements.
- The delivery of services should be supported by improved public transport and the development of demand led transport, including integration of M.connect with services.
- Within Moray this should enable people to use alternative modes of transport and reduce the need to rely on private vehicles.

- Schedule 10 Transport includes empirical evidence on existing transport movements including public usage, active travel, specific settlement patterns, and infrastructure condition. The evidence, represented through mapping, has established existing transportation and connectivity provision within settlements and the wider area and the provision for future transport development. For example, this information has been informed by Moray Council Active Travel Strategy 2022 to 2027.

8. Social Inclusion and Wellbeing:

- Address social isolation and promote community well-being by establishing community 'centres' and support services. This will be led by community groups with support from Moray Council. Continued working with Moray Council Community Support Unit will ensure the right mechanism are used to aid social inclusion and wellbeing, recognising the current and future constraints on service delivery.
- As noted, a number of community initiatives are being developed to support the local development plan including Local Place Plans. The approach of Place Based planning should ensure increased partnership working between community groups, business and agencies to address provision delivery and additional support services, including funding. This should include support for communities where there is higher evidence of inequality.

9. Local Governance and Decision-Making:

- Empower local decision-making bodies to address community needs effectively with support from Moray Council, when required. Encourage transparency, accountability, and resident participation in governance through stewardship and community support. This is being addressed through the development of Local Plan Plans and community plans. Furthermore, community engagement and input through the local development plan process and other strategies will ensure community participation.

10. Collaboration and Networking:

- Foster partnerships with neighbouring rural communities and urban areas to share resources. Moray is a diverse area and will require improved collaboration and networking between settlements and rural areas to deliver effective 20 min communities and local living. A number of rural settlements will require to collaborate and share services and improve linkages to these services in order to benefit from this approach. There are a number of good examples of dispersed rural communities that share resources contained within the 20 Minute Neighbourhoods in the Highlands and Islands report. This will provide a framework to examine shared services across Moray and create clusters that can adopt the local living principle. Furthermore, the place-based approach requires a holistic approach to the delivery of local living, through partnership working with funding bodies and delivery partners.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Establish metrics and benchmarks to measure the success of the local living methodology. Regularly assess and adapt strategies based on feedback and outcomes. Review mechanisms will need to be explored and developed to ensure the approach to local living is flexible and adaptable for future needs.

In conclusion, the approach to local living in Moray is a culmination of a range of policy areas that need to combine in an effective manner to deliver local living across a diverse range of settlements and rural areas. By focusing on combining these policy areas, for example enhancing infrastructure, promoting mixed-use developments, integrating green spaces, prioritising public transportation, and fostering community engagement, Moray can deliver and meet the policy requirements contained within NPF4.

Outcome

The development plan should encompass the Place Principle to ensure the specific characteristics, needs, and opportunities of a particular location or community are met and can be delivered through partnership working. This will require cross sector working with community groups, statutory bodies and private businesses, for example. This approach acknowledges the uniqueness of each place across Moray and seeks to tailor development and policy to the specific context, history, and aspirations of that area. Place-based planning supports collaboration with local stakeholders, community engagement, and the integration of social, economic, and environmental considerations.

To explore the Local Living approach Moray Council will use a Housing Market Area as an pilot area and test the local living approach using the evidence gathered to date. This will allow every element – for example, local economy, education and skills development, housing, infrastructure, healthcare, access to the environment and open spaces, transport and connectivity, and social elements, for example social inclusion, wellbeing, and local decision making - to be scrutinised and alter the methodology to suit. This will also allow linkages to be created between other parties, for example relating to economic development, community bodies etc. Furthermore, testing the methodology will highlight gaps in information and resources and allow the council to monitor and evaluate the process.

The collected evidence will provide a basis for decision making for the development plan, translating this into tangible actions can be achieved through place-based planning. There is an opportunity to use the local living concept as the basis for developing the Place Principle for settlements and wider rural areas, this should be wider than planning and also encompass economic development and funding opportunities.

The collected evidence will be used to aid in site selection for the forthcoming local development plan, ensuring the 20-minute approach and local living is embedded within the decision-making process.

It is recognised that delivering the key elements of Local Living will pose a number of challenges, including funding and resourcing of services and facilities. Many of these decisions will be taken by partner organisations who may have differing priorities and therefore elements of Local Living may be difficult to deliver. Likewise, limited council resources and financial constraints may prevent full-service delivery in recognised Local Living communities. Furthermore, the choices made by businesses and other service providers will dictate where these are located and therefore may not always meet the needs of the Local Living community.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Comments were received and have been addressed in the revised schedule from the following groups:

- Moray Council Transportation
- Moray Council Community Support Unit
- Moray Council Sports and Cultural Services
- Moray Council Education
- Moray Council Open Spaces

Comments were received and have been addressed in the Statement of Agreement from the following group; NHS Grampian.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- Impact on the spatial strategy due to allocation of land and promotion of brownfield sites to meet the requirements of local living.
- Criteria for development site selection to include assessment of active travel infrastructure to ensure that infrastructure is available or can be provided to provide access by walking, wheeling and cycling. Site selection process to also consider opportunities to access public transport services.
- Integration of the Core Path Plan to aid delivery of improved sustainable routes to address local living requirements e.g. upgrading to surfacing etc.

- Appropriate local employment opportunities to reduce commuting trips and supporting local economic development.
- Local retail opportunities to support business and communities.
- Examine health facilities to ensure they are located in accessible places or sustainable transport are in place to access these services.
- Provide opportunities for appropriate educational facilities including childcare opportunities, embed within communities.
- Provide opportunities for community indoor space.
- Enhance the varied opportunities for greenspace development including open space, play opportunities, biodiversity improvements, food growing etc.
- Provide and plan for housing options to allow for mixed communities.
- Increased use of masterplans and design briefs to ensure developments are following the Local Living principle.

Statements of Agreement

NHS Grampian

Agreed, subject to:

- The approach of 'Local Living' for the more rural Moray area and 20-minute neighbourhoods in existing settlements and new larger developments would be welcomed.

Under 5 Healthcare and Social services:

- NHSG do have some concerns, e.g. development of 'flexible health services and mobile healthcare by providing community spaces for service delivery'. NHS Grampian like many NHS boards currently faces significant financial challenges which impacts on NHSG's ability to rent, purchase or develop new facilities as well as increase capacity at existing premises. There are also challenges with staffing particularly in more rural areas. Use of technology such as 'near me consulting' has been one way that NHSG has been looking to enable some types of consultation to take place virtually from patients' homes.
- The focus for NHS Grampian continues to be addressing capacity at existing premises. NHS Grampian, along with Health and social Care Moray (HSCM) would prioritise creation of additional capacity at existing premises through reconfiguration or extension. NHSG and HSCM continue to work together on strategic premises planning. The HSCM inform NHSG how they plan to deliver primary care services across Moray, and this informs future premises planning.

Council response: Moray Council is aware of the current priorities of NHSG and we will continue to work with NHSG to ensure that the best approach to local living can be delivered through the preparation of the LDP.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	8a. Quality Homes- Housing Land Supply
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • section 15(1A) The local development plan must also include targets for meeting the housing needs of people living in the part of the district to which it relates.
Links to Evidence	<p>CD095 Moray Housing Need and Demand Assessment - 2023 CD096 National Planning Framework 4 and MATHLR figure CD097 Moray Council Housing Land Audit 2023 CD001 Moray Local Development Plan 2020 - Volume 1 - Policies CD028 Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report 2023 CD098 'Brownfield Sites' – Report to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 1 March 2022 and Appendix 1 CD099 'Brownfield Sites' – Report to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 25 October 2022 CD100 Moray Council Urban Capacity Studies 2023 CD101 Moray Council Self Build Register Feb 2024</p>
National Planning Framework 4 context	
<p>Local Development Plans are required to identify a Local Housing Land Requirement for the area they cover to meet the duty for a housing target and to represent how much land is required. NPF4 encourages an ambitious and plan-led approach with the aim that the Local Housing Land Requirement is expected to exceed the 10 year Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) set out in Annex E of NPF4.</p> <p>Deliverable land should be allocated to meet the 10-year Local Housing Land Requirement in locations that create quality places for people to live. Areas that may be suitable for new homes beyond 10 years are also to be identified. The location of where new homes are allocated should be consistent with local living including, where relevant, 20 minute neighbourhoods and an infrastructure first approach. In rural and island areas, authorities are encouraged to set out tailored approaches to housing which reflect locally specific market circumstances and delivery approaches.</p> <p>LDPs should provide a proportion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in city and town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities to support residential development.</p> <p>LDPs should set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Strategic Housing Land Requirements- Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023</p> <p>Planning authorities must take the figures set out in NPF4 (page 143), known as the Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) into account when arriving at their indicative housing land requirement. The MATHLR is the minimum amount of land for housing to be included within LDP's and the local housing land requirement should exceed the MATHLR. NPF4 sets the MATHLR as 3450 units for Moray.</p> <p>The MATHLR is evidence based, combining past development rates with future projections and policy ambitions. However, the local development planning guidance (p63) states that where more recent evidence is available this should be used as it enables the Evidence Report to be more up to</p>	

date. The Moray Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023 has been signed off by the Scottish Government Centre for Housing Market Analysis as being “robust and credible”.

The NPF4 figure for Moray of 3,450 for a 10-year period, when looking at a 20-year period could be assumed to be double at 6,900 units. This figure reflects levels of house completions in Moray which have averaged 363 units over the last 5 years.

For comparison purposes, in the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 (Volume 1), the Council identified a housing land requirement of 7049 units for a 20-year period. This provides a sensitivity check on the MATHLR figure.

Demographic context

- **Population:** The population of Moray grew by 11% between 2001 and 2021 compared with 8% growth across Scotland. Moray’s population growth is projected to reverse between 2018 and 2043 with a decline in population of just under -3%, compared to a projected increase in the national population over the same period of 2.5%. However, such projections need to be treated with some caution as Moray’s population in 2006 was projected to be less than 80,000 in 2018 and Moray’s population growth can be attributed to a number of factors, including planning for positive growth.
- **Households:** National Records of Scotland (NRS) estimate that the number of households living in Moray will increase by 5% between 2022 and 2042 using a Principal Household Projection. This compares to a projected 7% growth across Scotland and is significantly less than household growth achieved in Moray between 2011 and 2021 (9%).
- **Ageing population:** The number of 75+ year old head of households in Moray will grow by 84% by 2043 whilst every other age range will decrease. Single Person and 2 Adult households will be subject to the greatest growth levels in Moray with 17% and 11% projected between 2018-38 respectively. Housing delivery plans will therefore need to be aligned to an ageing and smaller household profile.

Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023

The graphic below summarises the outcomes of the HNDA.

Existing housing need is calculated from:

- Homeless households and those in insecure tenures
- Concealed (when one or more families in addition to the primary family are present in the home) and overcrowded households.
- Households who require specialist housing
- Households in below tolerable standards

Existing need is added to new housing need projected to arise which use baseline household statistics from 2022 and apply a 5% and 6% migration growth scenario. This is calculated as falling within the range of 2,258 and 2,815 with a higher growth scenario of 4,569, representing 10% also considered.



Stakeholders were consulted on 3 scenarios above (HNDA page 53), with the Moray Housing Market Partnership concluding that scenarios 2 and 3 (4,975 and 6730) were the preferred options upon which to create a range of housing estimates across the area. There was overwhelming stakeholder consensus that the growth scenario (6,730) should be used as a starting point for future housing delivery and land use planning within the new Local Housing Strategy and next Local Development Plan. Following validation, stakeholders were assured that there is robust local evidence to support the use of the growth scenario aligned to the ambitious economic development strategy associated with the Moray Growth Deal and overall approach in Moray to economic growth.

Therefore, the Moray HNDA all tenure housing estimates range from 4418 to 6730 over the next 20 years. The table below extracted from the HNDA (page 54) sets out the 20-year HNDA projections in 5-year bandings.

All tenure housing estimates	2022-2026	2027-2031	2032-2036	2037-2041	Total	Difference to Default	% Difference to Default
Default	1,021	508	499	400	2,428		~
Scenario 1 - Principal	3,011	508	499	400	4,418	1,990	82%
Scenario 2 - High Migration	3,100	646	653	576	4,975	2,547	105%
Scenario 3 - Growth 0.25%	3,568	1,080	1,084	998	6,730	4,302	177%

For the purposes of calculating the housing land requirement, the higher growth scenario, reflecting economic ambitions of the region, exceeds the MATHLR figure over the period to 2037. For the purposes of providing a generous housing land supply it is proposed to use the Growth scenario from the table above over the period 2022-2037 as a minimum to ensure a generous supply of land is identified over the local development plan period with an indication on longer term housing supply to meet demand, support master planning and an infrastructure first approach. The land supply will include LONG designations, an approach recognised through the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning, and this will be managed proactively as has been the case since 2007. A local policy on LONG designations setting out the triggers for their release will be required.

The housing land supply requirements will be split according to the housing estimates by partner area identified on page 54 of the HNDA, which identifies:

- 54% of this global housing estimate should be met in the Elgin HMA
- 16% of this global housing estimate should be met in the Forres HMA
- 14% of this global housing estimate should be met in the Buckie HMA
- 8% of this global housing estimate should be met in the Keith HMA
- 7% of this global housing estimate should be met in the Speyside HMA
- 1% of this global housing estimate should be met in the Cairngorms National Park HMA.

Housing Land Audit 2023

The annual housing land audit provides details of the existing supply of housing land, split into 3 categories of:

- Established- the total housing land bank.
- Effective- sites available and expected to be developed within the 5-year period.
- Constrained- sites which are not anticipated to come forward within the 5-year period due to constraints such as ownership, infrastructure, flooding, viability or being designated as a LONG reserve of land.

Established land supply (p3)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Moray	12,387	12,751	12,346	12,192	11,770

Constrained land supply (p4)

Constraint	No. of units	No. of sites
Contamination	64	2
Marketability	483	18
Ownership	635	5
Physical	282	11
Programming	1,409	9
LONG	3,875	9
Total	6,748	54

Effective housing land supply (p5)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Moray	4,189	5,811	5,508	5,365	5,022

Windfall sites (p6)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Windfall completions	56	38	16	22	47	14

Previous completions (p6)

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Moray	358	414	231	398	418

Brownfield sites

NPF4 Policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings aims to encourage, promote, and facilitate the reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings and to help reduce the need for greenfield development. Currently around 4% of all housing completions in Moray are on brownfield land.

A report to the Council's Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 1 March 2022 and followed up on 25 October 2022 identified the number of brownfield sites in Moray, assessing each longlisted site against a range of criteria to set out a prioritised short list of sites. The Council has several projects underway which are likely to address some of these sites and in doing so increase the number of residential units developed on brownfield land. This includes the Moray Growth Deal Housing Mix Delivery project which aims to support town centre regeneration as one of its investment objectives. The Council has also recently agreed use of external funding which has been secured to initiate a series of town centre grants which will also encourage residential opportunities in town centres.

With the emphasis placed on delivery within the planning system, it is important that the target set meets the right balance between ambitious, to bring about the change desired, and achievable given the need for staff resources, funding, partnerships and potentially property acquisition powers.

A target of 10% is proposed of housing completions over the next 10 years being completed on brownfield sites and a target of 5% is proposed of housing completions over the next 10 years within town centres. However, these targets are considered to be ambitious, and can only be achieved through additional funding being sourced to meet the additional costs and challenges of developing brownfield sites and current viability issues.

Capacity studies have also been undertaken by Council officers to review existing site capacities and potential new sites in addition to any further sites which may come forward through a Call for Sites process in advance of the Proposed Plan being progressed.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

- Local authority housing colleagues- Fiona Geddes, Housing Strategy and Development Manager
- Social housing providers- through the Housing Market Partnership through the HNDA
- Private housing providers- through Homes for Scotland north region Committee and through stakeholder workshops to develop the HNDA.
- Landowners- engaged through HNDA process.
- Public services- engaged through HNDA process.
- Representative bodies of housing providers and landowners- as above
- Gypsy Travellers and Travelling Showpeople- engaged through HNDA.
- Homes for Scotland- throughout HNDA process and annual HLA and through draft Evidence schedule

Details of how the Housing Market Partnership representatives and how they were engaged are set out on pages 14-15 of the HNDA.

Copies of this schedule were sent to:

- Fiona Geddes, Moray Council Housing Strategy and Development Manager
- Homes for Scotland

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

Taking account of the MATHLR, HNDA and HLA, the proposed housing land requirement is:

MATHLR 10-year scenario 3450 units minimum

HNDA growth scenario projected 2022-2037- 5732 units.

Taking the HNDA Growth scenario, this means the new Local Development Plan should allocate sufficient land for 5732 units of housing from the baseline year of 2022 through to 2037 to provide a 10-year supply within the new Plan and areas of land that may be suitable for new homes beyond 10 years.

To calculate how much additional land requires to be zoned for housing, completions for 2022 and 2023 are deducted from the overall requirements, as well as the effective housing land supply deducted along with any other sites which are considered to be free of other constraints but, because of build out rates, they are more likely to be developed after 5 years. These figures are set out in the Council's annual housing land audit and are summarised in the table below.

LHMA	Housing Supply Target HNDA Growth scenario 15 year2 2022-2037 (A)	Completions 2022 and 2023 (B)	Housing land requirement 2024-2037 (A-B)	Existing effective 5-year supply at 2024(C)	Sites effective 5yr+ (D)	Additional housing land supply required (A-B-C-D) 2024-2037
Moray	5732	418+464=882	4850	5022	1409	0
Buckie 14%			679	576	68	0
Elgin 54%			2619	2632	1227	0
Forres 16%			776	1360	98	0
Keith 8%			388	143	8	0
Speyside 7%			339.5	311	8	0
Cairngorms 1%			48.5	Not recorded in Moray HLA		

The table above identifies that the housing land requirement between 2024-2037 is 4850 units, taking account of completions recorded in 2022 and 2023. As there is an existing generous effective land supply and the effective 5 years plus supply, there is no need to identify additional land to meet need between 2024-2037.

However, there are a number of issues to consider in the new local development plan:

- There is an existing constrained supply of 5339 units, including over 3,875 units LONG reserve and it is proposed to retain LONG designations to ensure a pipeline of housing sites is available.
- Potential identification of additional brownfield land designations, referenced in the capacity studies.
- review of the indicative capacities of existing sites to reflect a significant increase in the number of smaller households and the need for single storey homes.
- replacement of any sites which are removed as allocations from the Plan and replaced with new sites.

- including small site allocations to meet local needs aligning with the spatial strategy.
- a review of empty homes in Moray and how these can best contribute to meeting need.

The above table will be updated to reflect any sites which are proposed to be deleted from the Plan.

There are estimated to be 2577 empty homes in Moray in March 2023, further flexibility is added by not including their potential contribution or the contribution from windfall sites into the housing land requirement calculation.

It is proposed to require further evidence and viability of sites as part of the ongoing plan preparation process. If sufficient evidence of both effectiveness and viability is not forthcoming, then sites will not be included, and existing designations may be deleted from the Plan.

Housing Targets

- **Annual housing completion target- HNDA Growth scenario – 440 units**
- **Additional housing land requirement (2024-2037 years)- 0 units**
- **Annual effective housing land supply target-500 units**

Statements of Agreement

Homes for Scotland (HfS)

HfS welcomes the overall aims of being ambitious, ensuring the local housing land requirement (LHLR) exceeds the 10 yr. MATHLR (which, it is acknowledged is a minimum rather than a maximum figure) and that the pipeline of land suitable for housing is deliverable up to and beyond 10 years.

HfS is concerned that the plan is not ambitious enough in terms of the indicative LHLR being suggested which results from the '23 HNDA, nor establishing how the pipeline land, especially the long-term land will become free of constraints and genuinely deliverable when required.

'The MATHLR is evidence based, combining past development rates with future projections and policy ambitions. However, the local development planning guidance (p63) states that where more recent evidence is available this should be used as it enables the Evidence Report to be more up to date.'

HfS provided a report by the Diffley Partnership/ Rettie & Co (2024) as evidence which needs to be considered reflecting the most up to date data. In line with the local development plan guidance, HfS state this more recent evidence should be used as it postdates the '23 HNDA which was prepared in 2022. See below regarding Areas of Dispute.

Council response - The Council's Housing Need and Demand Assessment has been signed off as robust and credible by the Scottish Government. Homes for Scotland were involved as key stakeholders within the Moray Housing Partnership in the preparation of the Assessment. The preparation of the work by Diffley Partnership/ Rettie & Co (2024) has not involved Moray Council. The report was not appended to the schedule submitted by HfS.

HfS are aware of the approach taken by Moray Council to manage the land supply, with the LONG policy and designation receiving national recognition. HfS are also aware that Moray Council maintains an up-to-date Housing Land Audit and has proactively released LONG land designations when policy triggers have been reached. The Council considers the response from HfS to be disappointing, lacking understanding of how the land supply has been managed over time.

Homes for Scotland

HfS noted they were unable to comment on the following evidence as links and details have not been provided in the Council's pro forma –

1. 'Brownfield Sites' – Report to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 1 March 2023 – no report attached.
2. 'Brownfield Sites' – Report to Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 25 October 2022 – no report attached.
3. Moray Council Urban Capacity Studies 2023 (no link attached).
4. Council data relating to second homes, short term lets, empty homes and the vacant and derelict land register.

Links to the Moray Growth Deal Housing Mix Delivery project should be included as evidence together with details of any consultation responses received to the initial building blocks for the LHLR and Housing to 2040. The ambitions of the deal, to “retain and attract young people/families (16-29yrs) to live and work in the area”.

The council need to ensure Brownfield sites that are to be identified or relied upon in the longer term as suitable housing sites are genuinely deliverable at this stage and not delay this.

The long-term land/ reserves should not be rolled forward because they always have been, as there needs to be clear evidence at this stage to show that any constraints can be overcome to ensure they can be delivered when required. This may include the need to consult now with statutory consultees (e.g. SEPA) to re-assess sites against new climate change and flooding requirements.

An understanding of the changing requirements of major local employers is needed to allow sufficient flexibility and uplift in the LHLR. For example, RAF Lossiemouth are currently buying up tracts of private family homes from housebuilders and offer support packages that will affect the local housing market. Additionally, the impact of neighbouring Freeport, which includes Ardersier, on those choosing to live in Moray must be considered fully.

Alongside a robust assessment of existing and proposed brownfield sites, the council should undertake a Call for Ideas exercise to ascertain what other land is, or could be, available for development and can contribute to a deliverable housing land supply over the duration of the emerging LDP. The suggestion that no new land will be allocated moving forward does not reflect ambitious growth and does not allow for new proposals to be considered.

Council response - The first two reports referenced are publicly available for HfS to access. The Moray Growth Deal and generally economic growth aspirations for Moray are clearly articulated in the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and were discussed and promoted by both Council officers and housebuilders in preparation of the Assessment. There is no need for further evidence on the Moray growth Deal given the aim to provide proportionate evidence and having already covered this issue through the Assessment.

In terms of Brownfield development, as HfS know, these are often long and complex sites to bring forward for development, however, NPF4 is quite clear on what it expects from the local development plan on this issue. To be genuinely deliverable at this stage is a site-specific issue outwith the scope of the Evidence Report. Bringing forward Brownfield sites can require significant investment, use of legal powers, working in partnership and staff resources, however the benefits are significant, supporting local living, reducing carbon and reducing demand for greenfield sites.

All sites, including LONG will be re-assessed and as stated if any sites are removed from the Plan then these will need to be replaced to ensure the housing land requirement is met. However, all sites have previously been through extensive consultation in order to be included within the Plan and any such changes are likely to be minimal.

Major local employers, including the RAF, were engaged throughout the HNDA and the wider growth opportunities are reflected in this.

The Council has already carried out a Call for Ideas to inform the Plan and will also be carrying out a Call for Sites to inform the Proposed Plan.

Statements of Dispute

Homes for Scotland (HfS)

Levels of existing housing need in Moray are more complex and much higher than is currently being accounted for through the HNDA tool.

The report commissioned by HFS by the Diffley Partnership and Rettie & Co highlights this and HFS welcomes a discussion with Moray Council to discuss this further. The latest research finds 9,100 households in Moray in some kind of housing need. The report concludes there are around 4,300 households in Moray in current need who will require an affordable housing option to meet their need. c.3,000 can afford a market housing option to meet their current need. The link between market and affordable housing is explored further in schedule 8b – Quality Homes – Affordable and Specialist Housing Requirements.

The evidence report should:

1. Recognise that new housing land allocations of scale can support existing local living and support/ help deliver new infrastructure.
2. The HNDA forecasts are based on post-recession data. If pre-recession data shows higher rates these should be used.
3. The predicted 'generous' housing target for '27-'36 falls below the MATHLR. Figures for '22-'26 should not be included towards achieving the MATHLR figure moving forward in the next LDP.
4. Reflect the latest evidence available in the attached Diffley Partnership/ Rettie & Co report.
5. The calculation of the LHLR needs to include the use of primary data for existing concealed and overcrowded homes. The HNDA tool defaults needs to be recalibrated and updated to take consideration of HFS's latest evidence so that the wider existing need is accurately identified. This should then inform the uplift expected to be applied to the MATHLR to define the LHLR and more accurately reflect existing need.

HFS feel the current indicative LHLR is insufficient to deliver ambitious housing growth, infrastructure together with the affordable and specialised housing needed in Moray over the next 10/20 years.

Council response - The Council disagrees with these comments. The HNDA has been subject to extensive stakeholder engagement and has been signed off as robust and credible by the Scottish Government. The Council has had no involvement in the Diffley Partnership/ Rettie & Co report which was only provided to the Council on 15 March 2024. The Council is satisfied that the growth scenarios plus the use of LONG designations will continue to ensure Moray enjoys a very generous supply of land for housing, as has been the case since 2007.

The Diffley Partnership/ Rettie & Co. report does not take account of the primary evidence in the HNDA or the comprehensive stakeholder engagement undertaken to develop the HNDA. The following high-level concerns regarding the HfS approach are highlighted:

- There is no information on representativeness of the data which is weighted by age and gender but the key element for HNDA is housing tenure.
- Broad categories of housing need are based on questions which are over simplistic in diagnosing need and there are no validation questions to gauge the level of response bias associated with a direct question.

- The major issue in the methodology relates to concealed households and not on existing households who have formed but are living “care of” with another household as a result of unmet housing need. Typically, concealed households are identified by defining if a household shares housing amenities with another household but does not share meals.
- The approach to the Council HNDA is more sophisticated than the HfS approach and is a more robust basis for informing future planning policy.

Issue: Topic / Place	8b) Quality Homes- Affordable and specialist housing requirements
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland)(Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • section 15(1A) The local development plan must also include targets for meeting the housing needs of people living in the part of the district to which it relates. • Section 15(5)(cb) the availability of land in the district for housing including for older people and disabled people • Section 16(E) to prepare and maintain a list of anyone interested in acquiring land for self- build housing.
Links to Evidence	<p>CD095 Moray Housing Need and Demand Assessment - 2023 CD102 Moray Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2023 CD103 Moray Council Local Housing Strategy 2019-2024 CD101 Moray Council Self-Build Register Feb 2024</p>
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context	
<p>NPF4 requires Local development Plans to take account of diverse needs and delivery models across all areas, as well as allocating land to ensure provision of accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople where need is identified.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Affordable housing</p> <p>By tenure, across the Moray area, the HNDA (p53) estimates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53% – 58% of housing estimates should be met by social housing • 10% – 11% of housing estimates should be met by below market housing • 15% – 17% should be met by market rented housing • 17% – 19% should be met by market housing <p>The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024/25 sets out the levels of affordable housing completions over the last 5 years (p2). Completions between 2019/20 and 2023/24 totalled 592 units, with no completions within the Speyside or Cairngorms Housing Market Areas.</p> <p>Specialist housing</p> <p>The HNDA (p57) identifies the contribution that specialist provision plays in enabling people to live well, with dignity and independently for as long as possible and identifies any gaps or shortfalls in that provision and the future level and type of provision.</p> <p>Accessible and Wheelchair housing</p> <p>Moray has a significant challenge with an ageing population, which is projected to continue with a 32% increase in those aged over 65 between 2022 and 2042. During this same period, negative growth is expected for those of working age with a -12% decline across Moray. These projections could impact on the sustainability of the Moray economy without positive measures and will necessitate housing, health and care interventions that enable the growing population of older people to live independently and well for as long as possible and identifies any gaps or shortfalls in that provision and the future level and type of provision.</p> <p>As part of the HNDA evidence base, a calculation was carried out to provide estimates of the requirement for accessible housing in Moray over the next 5 years. The calculation used a combined measure of existing need and newly arising need to provide annual estimates. The outcomes are that</p>	

assuming that a 5-year projection period is used to meet the need for accessible market housing (201 units), when benchmarked against average annual market supply in Moray (149); it shows a net shortfall of 52 accessible units per annum.

Assuming that 5-year projections period is used to meet the need for accessible affordable housing (357 units), when benchmarked against projected annual SHIP completions in Moray as well as the turnover of existing stock (256), an overall shortfall of 101 units per annum is evident.

Housing estimates therefore suggest a need for 101 accessible affordable homes and 52 accessible market homes each year for the next 5 years.

In addition, housing estimates suggest a need for 90 wheelchair accessible affordable homes and 25 wheelchair accessible market homes each year for the next 5 years.

Moray therefore clearly faces a significant challenge with its projected ageing population and people's desire to live and be cared for in their own homes for longer. The MLDP2015 introduced a policy on Accessible Housing requiring all new developments of 10 or more units to provide 10% of the market housing units as accessible housing (built to wheelchair accessible standard) of which half should be in single storey format. The MLDP2020 policy was amended through the Examination process to state;

“Housing proposals of 10 or more units incorporating affordable housing will be required to provide 10% of the private sector units to wheelchair accessible standard. Flexibility may be applied on sites where topography would be particularly challenging for wheelchair users.”

In practice, the MLDP2020 policy has delivered 2 storey housing which are not overtly marketed to older or disabled people, and which would require significant adaptation to facilitate occupation by a wheelchair user i.e. fitting of a through-floor lift and wet floor shower which may have to be provided via publicly funded disabled adaptations.

This analysis suggests that the current planning policy in place is not sufficient to meet the requirement for accessible homes.

Given the scale of local need for wheelchair accessible homes and the overall need for affordable housing, there is a need to develop a local policy position in LDP2027 to require a greater proportion of wheelchair accessible homes to be provided in the market housing at ground floor, recognising that this has implications on site density and viability.

Student accommodation (HNDA p70)

In March 2023 a paper on the University of the Highlands and islands (UHI) student accommodation requirements was presented to the Convention of Highlands and Islands (COHI) which gave an update on current provision and future student accommodation needs.

There are 40 rooms currently provided at UHI Moray which meets anticipated demand until the development of Moray Growth Deal additional campus provision for the MAATIC project which is anticipated to be complete 2026/27. The future requirements are for a minimum 150 rooms required by 2035, which could be provided as part of a regional approach including key worker and housing association properties.

In addition to UHI Moray student requirements, the Glasgow School of Art, based on Altyre Estate, south of Forres has a requirement for dedicated student accommodation as their need is currently being met through a range of local providers. Altyre Estate are currently exploring how this need can be met at the Dallas Dhu site, which is in close proximity to the school of art premises.

Key workers

Key worker surveys undertaken as part of the HNDA (p69) found that major future recruitment/retention pressures are being experienced by the public sector in Moray including Moray Council, the NHS and the private sector. The housing types most needed are private rented sector homes (30%),

mid- market rent and home ownership with respondents identifying Elgin as the priority area for key worker housing.

The MOD is anticipating a short term (2-3) year surge in housing requirements and has implemented a combination of solutions to address this surge and pinch points with an emphasis on maximising use of existing stock and building single living accommodation. This should mitigate any major housing market impacts associated with personnel moving into the area.

The HNDA estimates that approximately 120 key worker units may be required in the immediate future.

Gypsy Travellers and Showpeople (HNDA p80)

In 2023, Moray Council Housing service commissioned a research study as part of the HNDA into the 'Accommodation Needs of Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Moray. The research included analysis of best practice guidance and previous research, analysis of local data held by Moray Council as well as fieldwork to engage with the Gypsy/Traveller Community and Showman's Guild. The study concluded in July 2023 and offers the most recent estimates of accommodation/site requirements for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across Moray informed by analysis of unauthorised encampments and the views of the Gypsy/Traveller Community living in Moray.

There were 79 Gypsy/Travellers recorded as living in Moray in the 2011 Census. There is a population of Gypsy/Travellers households living in settled accommodation throughout Moray.

There are currently no public Gypsy/Traveller sites in Moray with the Council focusing on managing unauthorised encampments. In 2022, there were 13 unauthorised encampments across Moray. Analysis of unauthorised encampments between 2021 and 2022 shows that there has been a declining number of encampments with a peak in 2013 of 58 reducing to 13 in 2022.

Analysis of length of stay and location of the encampments between 2020 and 2022 shows that in 2020 and 2021, there were 15 encampments each year totalling 580 and 463 days, respectively, and in 2022 there were 13, totalling 478 days. The number of groups without children has been increasing, and the number of vehicles per group has been declining. There is activity across most of the calendar year (except January and February), with more encampments evident in the spring and summer.

Analysis of the location of unauthorised encampments across Moray HMAs identified that the Elgin HMA has the highest number of sites known to be used by Travellers at 10 discrete locations. Encampments in Buckie HMA have tended to last the longest number of days. There have been no encampments in either Keith HMA or Speyside HMA since 2020.

As part of the research project, views were sought from Gypsy/Traveller households who were living in private sites in Moray. Although the sample size achieved was small with 4 travellers participating (one family and one solo traveller). One participant felt there should be a public site with mixture of permanent and temporary pitches, which supports previous research undertaken, suggesting a demand for mixed provision of pitches. In addition, one participant who has a wheelchair user in their family contended that Traveller sites are rarely accessible for those with mobility issues.

There are 8 locations across Moray currently used as sites by Travelling Showpeople: one site (Elgin Auction Centre) is a private site, while the rest are operated by Moray Council. Neither the Seafield site in Keith nor the Strathlene site in Buckie are popular among Travelling Showpeople. According to previous engagement with the Scottish Showmen's Guild, many sites across Scotland suffer from a lack of adequate facilities, particularly water and power sources. The local development plan will have to consider the impact of any of these sites being developed.

Self- Build Register

Moray Council published a self- build register in October 2023, inviting people interested in self-build to register their interest to help gauge demand for such provision across Moray. To date, interest has been

fairly limited with 11 registered entries. The majority of interest has been expressed in rural areas around Elgin.

Short Term Lets

Spatial mapping of Short Term Lets and second homes is being prepared and will be included within the Evidence Report.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

- Local authority housing- Fiona Geddes, Housing Strategy and Development Manager
- Social housing providers have been engaged through preparation of the HNDA- through the Housing Market Partnership
- Private housing providers- through Homes for Scotland north region Committee and the Housing Market Partnership and through stakeholder workshops to develop the HNDA.
- Landowners- engaged through HNDA process.
- Public services- engaged through HNDA process.
- Representative bodies of housing providers and landowners- as above
- Gypsy Travellers and Travelling Showpeople- engaged through HNDA.

Copies of this schedule were sent to;

- Fiona Geddes, Moray Council Housing Strategy and Development Manager
- Homes for Scotland (HfS)

Summary of implications for the Proposed Plan

Taking account of the high levels of affordable housing need evidenced in the HNDA, it is proposed to continue with the current local policy requirement for all developments of 4 or more houses to provide 25% affordable units in accordance with NPF4 Policy 16 which requires that proposals for market homes will only be supported where the contribution to the provision of affordable homes on a site will be at least 25% of the total number of homes, unless the LDP sets out locations or circumstances where;

- a higher contribution is justified.
- a lower contribution is justified, for example, by evidence of impact on viability, where proposals are small in scale or to incentivise particular types of homes such as self- build or wheelchair accessible homes.

A tailored local policy position will be required to ensure a contribution towards affordable housing is provided by all sites, as per the MLDP2020, with criteria to address;

- piecemeal and individual plot development proposals- these are currently only supported where details for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site are provided and for proposals of less than 4 market housing units a commuted payment will be required towards meeting housing needs in the local housing market area.
- A contribution of less than 25% will only be considered where exceptional site development costs or other project viability issues are demonstrated.

Specialist housing

Accessible housing estimates therefore suggest a need for 153 homes each year for the next 5 years.

Wheelchair housing estimates suggest a need for 90 homes per annum for the next 5 years.

This analysis suggests that the current planning policy in place is not sufficient to meet the requirement for accessible homes.

Given the scale of local need for wheelchair accessible homes and the overall need for affordable housing, there is a need to develop a local policy position in LDP2027 to require a greater proportion of wheelchair accessible homes to be provided in the market housing at ground floor.

The Local Development Plan will need to make to meet demand for student accommodation in consultation with Moray College UHI and Glasgow School of Art and for key worker accommodation in discussion with community planning partners and industry representatives.

Gypsy Travellers/ Showpeople

The 2023 research provided the following recommendations which include site estimates and these should be reflected in the local development plan.

- Prioritise developing one or two public sites for Travellers with a mixture of permanent and temporary pitches. Based on the 2009 and 2017 research recommendations and the downward trend in encampments in recent years, a combined occupancy of 15-20 pitches should be sufficient. Sites should be in semi-rural areas with easy access to public services. Buckie and Elgin consistently have high levels of unauthorised encampments, so should be prioritised as areas for site development.
- The provision of the sites used by Travelling Showpeople are considered to meet demand, Moray Council should review the sites to ensure facilities are adequate to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople in terms of amenity and accessibility.

Self-Build

The Proposed Plan should consider appropriate approaches to meet demand for self-build plots, respecting wider policy approaches such as Local Living.

Short Term Lets and Second Home

The Proposed Plan should consider the spatial implications of Short Term Lets and whether there is a need for Control Areas to be introduced. At the time of drafting, there were 491 short term let license applications There are 752 second homes in Moray.

Statements of Agreement

Homes for Scotland

Homes for Scotland (HfS) recognises the challenges facing the future delivery of affordable and specialist housing in Moray, noting the increasingly ageing population, declining economically active population and the associated challenges in respect of delivering the right housing type together with necessary health and care infrastructure/ interventions. This is also set in the context of a decreased Scottish Government budget across all local authorities to deliver affordable housing.

Moray Council should provide evidence of the RSLs and affordable housing providers that have been consulted in respect of the delivery of the required affordable housing to take account of viability, funding, and deliverability. Evidence should also be shown of the capacity, funding, and ability of these providers to deliver the housing that is needed.

A clear definition of 'accessible' housing should be included and needs to include the full spectrum of housing type needs.

In terms of accessible and affordable housing, a cautious approach needs to be taken in respect of proposing at this stage that 25% affordable and 10% wheelchair accessible housing (implying these to be single storey) will apply across future market housing sites. This is very prescriptive and could make many developments unviable resulting in lower numbers of affordable/ specialist homes being delivered.

The percentage of market homes (17-19%) seems low considering the up-to-date evidence in the Diffley Partnership/ Rettie & Co report commissioned by HfS. This should be re-run, particularly considering the full range of existing and future housing need and taking a genuine growth scenario in terms of considering how the majority of the Council's future affordable and specialist housing will be delivered and how much will be reliant on the private market industry to assist delivering.

Council response

The HNDA sets out details of the affordable housing providers who were engaged in the development of Assessment as part of the Moray Housing Partnership, which HfS are also members of.

The Council is conscious of viability concerns, heightened by the current economic challenges, however the evidence is clear regarding the need for affordable and accessible housing.

The Diffley Partnership/ Rettie & Co report was received by the Council on 15 March 2024 and has no status in the local development planning process and Moray Council has not been involved in this report. The Moray HNDA has been signed off as being robust and credible by the Scottish Government and provides the evidence base for the local development plan. A "genuine growth scenario" is set out and supported in the HNDA. The delivery of affordable and specialist housing will be dependent on Scottish Government funding.

Statements of Dispute

Homes for Scotland (HfS)

HfS have submitted a new piece of primary evidence on existing housing need for Moray, undertaken by the Diffley Partnership and Rettie & Co (on behalf of HfS) (as also set out also in HfS's schedule 8a submission) which needs to be considered.

The full array of affordable homes and specialist housing need is required by the Act. This should include older peoples living requirements – accessible, wheelchair, adapted, non-permanent, supported, care as well as support for independent living at home, traveller/ gypsy sites, students (the latter two of which have been considered). Evidence relating to second homes and short term lets should be included.

There is concern that the level of market housing proposed under the LHLR will be insufficient to deliver the level of affordable and specialist homes that are needed, let alone contribute to the required level of infrastructure and social/ care interventions required if the forecasted population changes occur.

Primary data must be gathered to ascertain what the actual requirement for specialist housing is in Moray before seeking any on-site provision within new housing developments through the emerging LDP. The requirement for more single-storey homes is overly prescriptive. Clear evidence and consultation is required to ensure full consideration has been taken of existing housing adaptations. HfS welcome discussions over site densities of existing allocated sites and raise the blurring between building control and planning requirements in terms of space standards/ requirements moving forward.

HfS also urge Moray to review how the level of need will be delivered considering budgetary constraints moving forward and how the private sector can play a significant role in facilitating this.

Council response - The Diffley Partnership/ Rettie & Co report was received by the Council on 15 March 2024 and has no status in the local development planning process and Moray Council has not been involved in this report. The Moray HNDA has been signed off as being robust and credible by the Scottish Government and provides the evidence base for the local development plan.

Number of second homes and short term lets has been added following this comment.

Affordable housing providers with stock in Moray are all represented on the Housing Market Partnership. Affordable housing providers who are active in the delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan are consulted on the Plan's refresh each year. Moray Council has an excellent track record on maximising the take up of available Scottish Government More Homes Division grant funding. Actual spend outturn has exceeded Moray's Resource Planning Assumption for many years. Moray's pipeline of opportunities for delivery of affordable housing means that we have been in a position to take up spend slippage in other local authority areas to the advantage of those in housing need.

Issue: Topic / Place	9. Rural Homes
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 15(5)- the housing needs of the population of the area, including, the needs of persons undertaking further and higher education, older people and disabled people. • Section 15(5)(cc) - the desirability of allocating land for the purposes of resettlement • Section 15(5) – extent to which there are rural areas to which there has been a substantial decline in population • Section 16(2) (ab) – have regard to the list persons seeking to acquire land in the authority’s area for self-build.
	<p>CD104 Moray Local Development Plan Main Issues Report Rural Housing Topic Paper</p> <p>CD105 NPF4 Policy 17 Rural Homes Planning Interpretation Note (PIN)</p> <p>CD106 Kinloss Golf Course Masterplan</p> <p>CD072 Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report 2021</p> <p>CD028 Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report 2023</p> <p>CD101 Moray Council Self Build Register February 2024</p> <p>CD005 Moray Local Development Plan 2020 - Volume 3 - Rural Groupings</p>
NPF4 Context	
<p>The intention of NPF 4 Policy 17 Rural Homes is to encourage, promote and facilitate the delivery of more high quality, affordable and sustainable rural homes in the right locations. NPF 4 also recognises that the Moray Local Development Plan should set out a tailored approach for rural housing to safeguard the distinct character of the area and reflect locally appropriate delivery approaches.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Moray Local Development Plan - Main Issues Report Rural Housing Topic Paper</p> <p>A Rural Housing topic paper was prepared as part of the Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2020 Main Issues Report stage. The topic paper set out the background and analysis undertaken to redefine the approach to rural housing in Moray. This was an evidence led approach taking account of an assessment of development on the ground, a review of rural housing consents, a review of uptake of plots in rural groupings, cumulative build up analysis supported by landscape expertise, experience of officers with extensive knowledge of rural housing and evidence from the Moray Local Review Body (MLRB) decisions.</p> <p>The conclusions reached were to tighten the rural housing policy to reinforce the settlement hierarchy by directing new development to rural groupings in the first instance, followed by reuse and replacement of existing buildings and lastly to sites in the open countryside. A key objective was to promote a more sustainable pattern of growth and seek to limit the suburbanisation of the countryside. Based on cumulative build up data pressurised areas were identified as being unsuitable for further housing. There was a clear pattern of pressure for rural housing on the edge of Moray’s main settlements of Elgin, Forres, Buckie and Keith and this was reflected in pressurised area maps that were created to support the policy. The Rural Housing Topic Paper prepared to support the MLDP 2020 identified that Moray’s smaller towns and villages (27 in total) combined, had an average completion rate of 34 homes whilst the average completion rate of rural homes in the open countryside was 42 homes. Furthermore, close to 50 rural housing consents were granted in close proximity to one another</p>	

in area on the edge of Elgin (Birnie) over a 5-year period. This is shown in map form in the Rural Housing Topic Paper. To try and alleviate this, areas of intermediate pressure were identified to direct new housing into areas where the landscape could more easily accommodate further development subject to meeting siting and design requirements. The siting criteria was seen as an important means of ensuring sites would have appropriate backdrop and enclosure to provide containment and ensure new houses fitted sensitively into the landscape. The design criteria developed promote simple traditional forms of housing with a limited palette of appropriate materials and the avoidance of excessive detailing. This approach closely aligns with the desired outcomes of NPF 4 Policy 17 which seek to ensure that the distinctive character, sense of place and natural and cultural assets of rural areas are safeguarded and enhanced.

This policy approach has been in place since 2020 and evidence from Monitoring Reports in 2021 and 2023 evidence that it is working well (see section below). In summary, no new pressurised areas have emerged, design standards have improved, and design criteria have been tested at the MLRB with decisions supporting policy requirements including restricting the height of new homes and avoiding the use of concrete tiles. To date there have been no new consents in any pressurised or sensitive areas.

It is noted that reference is made to the Scottish Government 6-fold Urban Rural Classification 2020 as a consistent way of defining areas based on population and accessibility. It is also accepted that finer grained, local classifications can be used to ensure rural housing approaches are locally tailored to reflect local circumstances. On that basis the Council considers the local approach based on detailed information gathering, officer experience and in depth knowledge of the issues alongside landscape expertise is a more appropriate means of establishing a tailored approach to rural housing. The use of the 6-fold Urban Rural Classification is not considered appropriate to Moray as it would open up pressurised and sensitive areas such as the coast exacerbating the issue that the current LDP policy is seeking to address.

Identification of New Rural Groupings

The identification of a sensitively sited new rural grouping in an area identified as being under pressure from cumulative build up of new housing was part of the approach to reinforcing a rural development hierarchy. Miltonhill was identified as a new rural grouping with development potential for 20 homes alongside holiday accommodation as part of a diversification away from the existing use as a golf course. The Council worked in partnership with the landowner and a design team to create a Masterplan to deliver a high quality development of innovative timber homes that utilise renewable technologies. At the time of writing all plots have planning consent and over half have been constructed and are occupied. The intention is to continue to direct development to rural groupings and explore opportunities to identify new rural groupings.

Role of Existing Rural Groupings

Monitoring Reports in 2021 and 2023 evidenced that there has been a lack of take up of plots in existing rural groupings. To reinforce the identified rural hierarchy existing groupings, need to contribute more in terms of delivering housing sites. There is no definitive answer as to why more sites have not come forward, it is considered there are a number of factors including escalating build costs, legacy of a high number of extant consents for individual plots in the open countryside due to previous permissive rural housing policies and lack of marketing/interest from landowners. It may be plots with rural groupings are more in demand as the number of existing consents in open countryside reduce. Going forward further evidence needs to be gathered and an approach developed to enable rural groupings to increase their contribution to the rural housing market in Moray which is a more sustainable form of development.

Rural Homes Planning Interpretation Note (PIN)

A Planning Interpretation Note (PIN) was prepared by the Council to interpret NPF4 Policy 17 Rural Homes as an interim position. Moray Council's tailored approach is set out in Policy DP4 Rural Housing of the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 and other relevant policies and the guidance clarifies the local approach to what constitutes an "allocated" site in terms of NPF4 Policy 17. The guidance also provides detailed local policy interpretation for a wide range of rural housing scenarios including homes for retiring farmers, homes for essential needs workers for rural businesses, enabling development for historic assets and crofts/ woodland crofts. The guidance also states that there are no previously inhabited areas other than the Cabrach that are deemed suitable for resettlement in Moray.

Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Reports 2021 and 2023

The 2021 and 2023 Monitoring Reports demonstrate that the current policy approach is working. It is successfully protecting pressurised areas from further inappropriate development. The siting and design policy requirements are also driving better located houses within the landscape and design standards have also improved with more traditional simple forms of homes being delivered on the ground. Since the adoption of NPF 4 Policy 17 there have been no planning applications that have been determined based on information pertaining to the essential needs of workers in rural development or homes for retiring farmers. In the few limited applications for workers accommodation sites have been in areas of intermediate pressure and met siting criteria. Historically, this has not been an issue in Moray over the last 20 years and has not featured as a policy requirement. In addition to this there are concerns regarding occupancy conditions not being enforceable, Policy 17 Rural Homes being open to abuse to the detriment of Moray and an approach that is contrary to aspirations for climate resilience.

Moray Council Self Build Register

At the time of writing there are 10 entries on the self build register. The limited data collated so far indicates that there is demand for individual serviced rural house plots for large family homes situated near Moray's towns and villages. The desire to construct innovative/sustainable self build homes was also expressed. This demand is consistent with trends observed when developing the current rural housing approach. The delivery of self build plots within existing rural groupings and the potential for identification of new rural groupings in pressurised areas is an essential part of the solution creating clustered development, delivering more sustainable patterns of development and sustaining rural communities. This will be further considered through the LPD 2027.

Moray Local Development Plan 2020 – Volume 3 Rural Groupings - Cabrach

The Cabrach is an identified rural grouping in the Moray Local Development Plan 2020. Given its unique circumstances there is no defined boundary or specific development opportunities identified, unlike all the other identified rural groupings. Instead, the wider area of the Cabrach reflective of the areas of interest of the Cabrach Trust is identified to facilitate development including low impact and modest scale proposals for regeneration of the community including housing, employment and low and zero carbon generating technologies. This approach positively encourages rural development to help repopulate and sustain this remote rural community through sustainable economic growth and is in keeping with the NPF 4 ambitions for resettlement. Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) identified the Cabrach as the only fragile community in Moray and as such it is deemed to be the only area appropriate for resettlement in Moray.

Housing Needs of the population and demographics

Housing needs for Moray including the needs of persons undertaking higher education, older people and disabled people and the availability of land for housing including for older people and disabled people is set out in Schedule 9b Housing. The MATHLR figure and annual Housing Land Audit (HLA) and methodology underpinning it are set in Schedule 9 Housing.

In terms of understanding population change over time in rural areas release of the 2022 census data is awaited and when published analysis will be undertaken to see how rural populations have changed over time.

Conclusion

A tailored approach to rural housing will be developed taking account of the evidence gathered and local knowledge. The policy must reflect the characteristics of the rural housing market in Moray and balance supporting rural housing and preventing further suburbanisation of the countryside and unsustainable patterns of travel. Following the success of creating a new rural grouping to cluster new development and promote sustainable and innovative design options for replicating this approach will be explored. To further strengthen the rural development hierarchy and support more affordable homes in the countryside the Council will seek to work closely with landowners to assist in the delivery of serviced plots for self-build in existing rural groupings. The Cabrach will be identified as an area for resettlement. Further consideration will be given to rural population census data when it is made available.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Copies of this schedule were sent to:

- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Cabrach Trust – see statement of agreement below.
- Communities Housing Trust
- Crofting Commission

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- Prepare a tailored approach to rural housing in Moray taking account of existing evidence, local knowledge/experience and specific conditions and characteristics of Moray.
- Investigate identification of new rural grouping/s in pressurised areas in Moray to meet demand.
- Work with landowners to identify and increase the delivery of plots in existing rural groupings.
- Identify the Cabrach as an area suitable for resettlement.
- Analyse 2022 Census rural populations data and identify if there are any impacts on approach to rural housing.

Statements of Agreement

Cabrach Trust

With regards "no defined boundary or specific development opportunities identified". The Cabrach, as a rural parish, is well defined and rich in cultural history. Further, in the Cabrach, and under the auspices of The Cabrach Trust, several development opportunities are navigating construction and planning activity, including development of a new social enterprise distillery and heritage centre, restoration of a community and learning hub, and the progression of design activity on a small rural housing portfolio.

Owing to the Cabrach's designation as the only fragile community in Moray, and thus deemed to be the only area appropriate for resettlement in Moray, recent significant inward investment is worth noting, including funding from Highlands & Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government, Social Investment Scotland, and significant private philanthropy.

The work being taken forward by The Cabrach Trust and wider community has the potential to bring about systemic change and regeneration in the Cabrach, with the potential of becoming an exemplar of rural regeneration in action.

Moray Council consider the balance of information within the schedule to be proportionate in terms of reference to the Cabrach. The additional information provided is not considered to constitute evidence but instead provides further contextual detail. On that basis it is not proposed to amend the schedule.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	10a) Infrastructure First
<p>Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section</p>	<p>The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • section 15(5)(d) The infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities); • section 15(5)(e) How that infrastructure is used; • section 15(5)(cd) The health needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those health needs; • section 15(5)(ce) The education needs of the population of the district and the likely effects of development and use of land on those education needs; and • section 15(5)(cg) The capacity of education services in the district. <p>The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation 9(2)(e) The planning authority are to have regard to the following plans and strategies, insofar as relating to the local development plan area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The national waste management plan; (ii) Any regional transport strategy; and (iii) Any local transport strategy.
<p>Links to Evidence</p>	<p>CD119 Scottish Government Circular 3/2012 Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements CD120 Moray Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) CD001 Moray Local Development Plan 2020 – Volume 1 - Policies CD121 Moray Developer Obligations – Supplementary Guidance – 2020 CD097 Moray Housing Land Audit – 2023 CD122 Scottish Government National Improvement Framework CD123 Scottish Government Scotland’s Learning Estate Strategy ‘Connecting People, Places and Learning’ CD124 Moray Council Learning Estate Strategy 2022-32 CD125 Moray Council School Roll Forecast March 2024 CD126 NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan Update 2020-2030 CD127 NHS Grampian Infrastructure Investment Plan 2019-24 CD128 NHS Grampian Strategic Plan A Plan for the Future 2022-28 CD129 NHS Grampian Strategic Plan A Plan for the Future Delivery Plan 2023-26 CD130 NHS Grampian A Plan for the Future – Dr Gray’s Hospital 2023-33 CD131 GP Premises Direction Guidance Note Annexe 1 CD132 Premises Direction 2004: GP Unit Sizes CD133 2018 General Medical Services Contract in Scotland CD134 Scottish Health Planning Notes 36 Part 1 General Medical Practice Premises</p>

	<p>CD135 Scottish Health Planning Notes 36 Part 2 NHS Dental Premises</p> <p>CD136 Scottish Health Planning Notes 36 Part 3 Community Pharmacies</p> <p>CD137 Moray Council Draft Sport and Leisure Capital Investment Plan 2022-32</p> <p>CD138 Scottish Water Capacity Plans and Datasets for Moray</p> <p>CD139 National Grid Energy System Operator (ESO) Pathway to 2030</p> <p>CD140 SSEN Summary Report on Consultation Beauly to Peterhead November 2023</p> <p>CD141 Reaching 100% (R100) Programme</p> <p>CD142 Future Cemetery Provision Strategy 2018</p> <p>CD143 SEPA Scottish Household Waste Generated and Managed Statistics 2022</p> <p>CD144 Defence Infrastructure Organisation Safeguarding Consultation Zones Map</p>
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National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context

Policy 18 Infrastructure First sets out that the LDP and Delivery Programme should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. This means that infrastructure needs are understood early in the development planning process as part of an evidence-based approach, and that infrastructure considerations are integral to development planning and decision making. The LDP and Delivery Programme are to set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base. This is to include information on the location, type, delivery timescales and body, and the level of contributions. The LDP and Delivery Programme are to align with relevant national, regional and local infrastructure plans and policies and the Scottish Government’s infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies.

Policy 15 Local Living and 20-minute Neighbourhoods sets out that the LDP is to encourage, promote and facilitate the application of the Place Principle and create connected and compact neighbourhoods where people can meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, preferably by walking, wheeling or cycling or using sustainable transport options. A key outcome is that new and existing communities are planned together with homes and key local infrastructure including schools, community centre, local shops, green spaces, health and social care, digital and transport links. Mixed use neighbourhoods support health and well-being, reduce inequalities and are resilient to the effects of climate change. LDP’s should support local living within settlements through their spatial strategy and associated site briefs and masterplans. Local Living is dependent on the provision of key local infrastructure. Local Living is addressed in Schedule 7.

Policy 13 Sustainable Transport is addressed separately in Schedule 10b.

Policy 11 Energy sets out that LDPs should seek to realise their area’s full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy production. This schedule only covers relates to grid/network capacity. Policy 11 is covered in detail in Schedule 5.

Policy 12 Zero Waste sets out that LDPs should encourage, promote, and facilitate development that is consistent with the waste hierarchy. This means that the reduction and reuse of materials in construction is prioritised and that infrastructure for zero waste and to develop Scotland’s circular economy is delivered in appropriate locations. Therefore, LDPs are to identify appropriate locations for new waste management facilities and meet identified needs in a way that moves waste as high up the waste hierarchy as possible.

Policy 24 Digital Infrastructure sets out that LDPs should support the delivery of digital infrastructure, including fixed line and mobile connectivity, particularly in areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.

Moray Local Development Plan 2027 (LDP27)

The infrastructure necessary to support, promote and facilitate sustainable, productive, and liveable places needs to be based on both quantifiable (e.g. capacity of facilities) and qualitative (e.g. health and well-being) information. NPF4 policy 15 Local Living sets out that places and/or neighbourhoods that support health and well-being, reduce inequalities and that are resilient to the effects of climate change need to be planned with key local infrastructure such as schools, community facilities, health, and social care, etc. Preventative planning can potentially significantly reduce public sector spending in the longer term. The delivery of the necessary infrastructure is largely dependent on the availability of funding at national government level and local government budgets.

In terms of the necessary infrastructure to facilitate development growth, an approach similar to that currently set out in the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 (LDP 2020) and associated Development Obligations Supplementary Guidance (SG) will be considered for the LDP27. The LDP 2020 Primary Policy 3 (PP3) Infrastructure and Services together with the Settlement Statements sets out the level, type and location of infrastructure necessary to support development. Sites expected to contribute are also identified. Further detail is set out in the SG which allows regular reviews to be undertaken to reflect changing local circumstances or policies, inflationary increases for rates, etc. (i.e. areas that cannot wait for a 10-year LDP review). The LDP 2020 Delivery Programme sets out who, when, how and by whom the infrastructure will be delivered, and priorities, as far as practically possible. The LDP 27, Delivery Programme and any associated planning guidance will be informed by a robust evidence base as discussed in this Schedule.

Moray Council facilitate a LDP Delivery Group which includes a wide range of representatives from NHS Grampian, Moray Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Scottish Water, Scottish Gas Networks (SGN), SSEN Transmission and/or SSEN Distribution, Transport Scotland, and Council Services for Education, Transportation, Sports and Recreation, and Housing. Other representatives attend, as and when required. In accord with the Place Principle, opportunities to work together to share resources are identified and explored through this Group as well keeping the evidence base up to date. This Group informed the LDP2020 infrastructure requirements as well as subsequent reviews of the SG, and similarly the Group will inform the evidence base for the LDP27 and Delivery Programme.

Summary of Evidence

EDUCATION

Learning Estate Strategy (LES)

The Moray Council Learning Estate Strategy 2022-32 (LES) aligns with both the Scottish Government's 'Scotland's National Learning Estate Strategy: Connecting Peoples, Places and Learning' and the National Improvement Framework and the local priorities set out in Moray Council's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Corporate Plan.

The LES covers Early Learning, Additional Support Needs (ASN), and Primary and Secondary Education. It sets out a 10-year plan on how Moray Council will work to optimise its investment of resources in a prioritised manner to meet the future needs of learning and teaching. The LES aspirations and key drivers of excellence, inclusion, place and sustainability are underpinned by 10 Guiding Principles of the National Learning Estate Strategy.

A range of factors influence the LES proposals and their delivery. These include pre-school/school roll trends, Additional Support Need (ASN) requirements, early learning centre/school/enhanced provision capacities, space to grow, building condition (fabric, safety and security), building sustainability, educational factors such as opportunities for outdoor learning and pupil choice, community benefit factors, partnership opportunities to align building investment across local public sector providers, house build completions and net zero targets. Together these factors will determine future recommendations to close, merge, extend, build, rezone or mothball educational facilities in Moray. The LDP informs, and is informed by, the LES to determine the future planning and coordination of the learning estate with development in Moray. The outcome of any actions within the LES that has spatial implications (i.e. rationalisation or expansion of the estate) will be reflected in the LDP.

In Moray, there are:

- 8 Secondary Schools
- 45 Primary Schools (including Crossroads Primary School which is currently mothballed)
- 17 Additional Support Needs Enhanced Provisions within secondary and primary schools
- 62 Early Learning and Childcare Centres (ELC) (24 Local Authority ELC, 11 partner ELC that have lease agreements with the Local Authority for the space they use, and 11 private ELC). 23 Local Authority and 11 partner ELC are co-located with primary schools with the only exception being Lady Cathcart in Buckie which is a standalone facility.

Constraints/Challenges & Spatial Implications for LDP27

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

The ELC Expansion Programme is almost complete with one minor project at Portgordon nursery outstanding. This project is due to be completed summer 2024. The SRF is indicating a falling primary school roll over the next 5 years and given the recent annual fall in birth rates this may be reflected in future early learning pupil numbers. This will be taken into consideration in the future planning for ELC.

Additional Support Needs (ASN)

The requirement for an overall ASN strategy is under consideration by Moray Council. ASN requirements can have an impact on the learning estate in terms of the size of buildings given higher space ratios per pupil, etc. and outdoor learning environments. Work is in progress with early health data to inform an understanding of the primary school ASN requirements and similarly with primary school ASN data to inform secondary school ASN requirements. This will inform an overall ASN strategy which may have an impact on the infrastructure requirements for the learning estate. Where an impact has a spatial implication, for example, the need to identify land for additional accommodation, access to outdoor space, etc. this will be reflected in the LDP.

Primary and Secondary Education

The School Roll Forecast (SRF) is published annually. It is based on school census data released in September and a number of other data sources such as the National Records of Scotland, NHS Grampian and the Moray Housing Land Audit (HLA). The SRF published in March 2024 identifies that the following schools have a rising school roll forecast and will reach the capacity thresholds (90% for Secondary Schools, 80% Planning Capacity for Primary Schools) set out in the Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance in the next 10 years:

Buckie

- Buckie High School
- Cluny Primary School

Elgin

- Elgin High School

- Bishopmill Primary School (Elgin Academy ASG)
- Seafield Primary School (Elgin Academy ASG)
- Linkwood Primary School (Elgin High School ASG)
- Greenwards Primary School (Elgin High School ASG)
- Mosstowie Primary School (Elgin High School ASG)

Forres

- Anderson's Primary School
- Logie Primary School

Speyside

- Mortlach Primary School

The LES high level programme set out a number of priority projects over the 2022-2032 period. The LES programme has been updated due to changes in a number of information factors (such as falling birth rates, and slower completion rates) and the following are identified as priority projects:

- New Build Forres Academy
- Elgin High School Extension
- Future Buckie High School – options appraisal to consider new build, refurbishment and hybrid
- Elgin South (West) Primary School Capacity Increase – options appraisal to consider a new Primary School or school extension projects.

This reflects that the above schools are at or reaching their capacity thresholds and/or that the range of factors set out in the LES such as the condition of the school requires action by the Council.

As set out in the LES a comprehensive review of each Associated School Group is to be undertaken by Moray Council. The purpose is to agree an approach with the community and other key stakeholders such as children, school staff and service providers on the future investment within the ASG area and agree actions to take forward a more sustainable learning estate within the timeframe and budget available. The first round of engagement on the 'Sustainable Learning Estate' for the Forres ASG commenced in September and finished in December 2023 with community drop-in sessions held in October 2023. Engagement on the Buckie ASG has recently commenced. Engagement on the 6 remaining ASG's is planned to be completed in early 2025. The outcome of the ASG reviews which may include rezoning, merging or rationalisation of the learning estate will be reflected in the LDP27.

A programme of full condition surveys for the learning estate is in progress and is anticipated to be complete early 2025. These include carbon reduction surveys and will identify major upgrade works and prioritise projects to address these. Lifetime maintenance plans will also be developed for all schools to ensure they are maintained at minimum B standard for condition and suitability. These surveys and maintenance plans will inform future recommendations for the learning estate, and where these have spatial implications, such as extending the premises or outdoor space outside the current school site boundary these will be reflected in the LDP.

A review of the LES Delivery Programme including a review of the strategic roadmap which focuses on savings options is underway and will be reported to a meeting of Moray Council in early 2024. This will inform the timeline and options for delivery of the LES. This, or any subsequent review, will be reflected in the LDP and the LDP Delivery Plan.

There are a number of variables that impact on the forecasting of school rolls and in turn, capacity which may potentially affect future recommendations for the LES. These are largely external and include the movement of personnel associated with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Royal Air Force (RAF) Lossiemouth and MOD Engineer Regiment at Kinloss, fluctuations in birth rates, house build completion rates, funding available from both national and local government budgets particularly for larger infrastructure projects, and alignment of strategies, plans and investment processes within and

between different organisations. For example, the delivery timescale for the Future Forres Academy project has largely been dictated by the award of Learning Estate Investment Programme 3 (LEIP3) funding from the Scottish Government. The impact of external variables, which are monitored by the Council as much as practically possible, inform future decisions on the LES.

Spatial Implications

As set out above, consideration will need to be given to the quantifiable and qualitative aspects of placemaking and local living in terms of the review of educational facilities within Moray. The availability of funding is an important factor in delivering local infrastructure to promote, support and facilitate local living and its associated benefits. Any revisions to the school estate will be subject to the statutory consultation set out in legislation.

Forres

Moray Council will receive Scottish Government LEIP 3 funding (in post completion revenue grants over the next 25 years) to support delivery of a replacement Forres Academy secondary school. The bid was successful due to the poor condition rating (D – Bad). The original earliest project date for delivery of the new school was August 2029 however due to the discover of RAAC in August 2023 the project completion has been brought forward to January 2028. Moray Council have engaged Hub North Scotland Ltd (HNSL) to commence work on a concept design for the new Forres Academy (under the Future Forres Academy project). A public engagement on a preferred site for the new build is planned for April 2024 with a final decision to be made the Education, Communities and Leisure Services Committee in May 2024. A formal consultation on the new school will take place following site selection.

Elgin

An extension to Elgin High School is planned to be delivered in late 2026. This is required as capacity is currently being exceeded in the school and there has been an increase in ASN space requirements. This is currently only managed due to temporary modular accommodation provided in 2023. The SRF is impacted upon by the residential development in progress and planned for the Elgin South area over the next 10-15 years which will exacerbate the capacity issues. Funding is available through the Scottish Government's LEIP2 programme to deliver the extension. Any implications from expanding the school beyond its current boundary will be reflected in the LDP however, a planning application will precede this.

A new primary school in the north of Elgin within the Findrassie expansion area and a new primary school in the Elgin South expansion area are identified in the LDP2020. The sites are identified within the respective Masterplans for these growth areas. A decision has been taken by Moray Council to defer for a 5 year period (revisited annually) the Findrassie primary school project due to a number of factors including rising project costs, lower housing build out rates than initially forecast, and the potential for existing schools within the Elgin Academy ASG catchment to accommodate pupils arising from the development in the short term. The LDP will reflect the outcome of any future decisions taken on the Findrassie primary school. Similarly, the requirement for a new primary school within the Elgin South area is under consideration and the LDP will reflect any future decisions taken.

Buckie

Due to the deteriorating condition of the current Buckie High School and anticipated future capacity constraints, the Council are progressing the Future Buckie High School project as an investment priority despite not receiving LEIP3 funding. Similar to the Future Forres Academy project, Hub North Scotland Ltd (HNSL) have been appointed to progress the project/design brief and outline business case (with updated cost model) for the Future Buckie High School. The anticipated completion date for these is April 2024. This will inform a number of options for consideration by Elected Members.

As set out in the LES high level programme plan the delivery timescale for the Future Buckie High School project is 2029/30 however, this may be impacted on by affordability given the Council's budgetary pressures. Any spatial implications arising from the Future Buckie High School project, Sustainable Learning Estate Buckie ASG review, which is due to commence imminently, and programme of condition surveys will be reflected in the LDP.

Remainder of Moray

As set out above, engagement on the Sustainable Learning Estate ASG reviews and programme of condition surveys will inform the future learning estate within each ASG area. The spatial implications will be reflected in the LDP.

Further Education

The University of the Highlands and Islands has a learning centre within Moray (known as UHI Moray). This is primarily located in Elgin. Two Moray Growth Deal (MGD) projects are associated with UHI Moray – the Business Enterprise Hub and Moray Aerospace Advanced Technology and Innovation Campus (MAATIC). The Business Enterprise Hub is a proposal within the Elgin City Centre Masterplan and forms part of a larger mixed used brownfield regeneration project within Elgin City Centre. Discussions are ongoing regarding MAATIC. The spatial implications arising from the MGD projects along with any additional student accommodation that may be required by UHI will be taken into consideration in the preparation of the LDP.

Moray Economic Partnership (MEP) Childcare Working Group

Childcare availability, specifically affordable wraparound childcare, has become an ever-increasing barrier to employment in Moray. This includes childcare outwith the statutory funded provision within the nursery or school day, including before and after school, as well as during the holidays which is preventing many parents from reaching their full employment potential and is a barrier to a productive economy. A short-life working group has been formed to develop a business case setting out the scale of the issue, economic consequences, and evidence of demand and capacity. The group began meeting in January 2023. Any implications in terms of land use (e.g. facilities) and/or community wealth building (e.g. training of childminders) will be reflected in the LDP27.

Infrastructure First Approach for Education and Developer Obligations

Developer obligations can form part of the funding for education infrastructure where the 5 tests of Circular 3/2012 and NPF4 policy 18 are met. Given that development viability is a key consideration in development planning, the level of developer obligations sought does not cover the full cost of education infrastructure. Therefore, the timescale for delivery is largely dependent on the availability of other forms of funding such as the Scottish Government LEIP.

A review of the Developer Obligations SG is currently underway. The LES, SRF and any other associated documents or decisions by the Moray Council will continue to inform the level and type of developer obligations sought. The review will inform the LDP27, Delivery Programme and any associated planning guidance.

HEALTHCARE

NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan Update 2020-2030 and NHS Grampian Clinical Strategy

The NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan underpins the delivery of the NHS Grampian Strategic Plan 'A Plan for the Future 2022-2028' and the strategies of the three Health and Social Care Partnerships that operate within Grampian. This includes the Health and Social Care Moray (HSC Moray). The NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan prioritises the available funding for delivery.

The NHS Grampian Strategic Plan outlines the changes that are increasing demands on healthcare: people living longer independent lives and often also living with chronic multiple conditions, a shrinking workforce relative to demand, and budgets that are not keeping pace with inflation. The NHS Grampian and HSC Moray strategic plans, and Asset Management Plan aim to deliver the 'Quadruple Aim' to improve people's health and well-being.

Physical infrastructure such as buildings, equipment and Information Technology (IT) has a key role to play in supporting the clinical care provided within Moray and Grampian, as a whole. The Asset Management Plan sets out the 4 key elements for the long-term planning of physical infrastructure for healthcare services. These include:

- Major site development plans: Establishing development plans for each main site, including Dr Gray's Hospital in Elgin.
- Primary Care Premises (PCP) Plan: Identifies priorities for future investment in new and development of existing primary care infrastructure and informs Board decisions regarding the development of future initial agreements to support the case for investment in new premises. NHS Grampian and HSC Moray are currently working on updating the Grampian PCP Plan. Maryhill (Elgin), Fochabers and Keith Medical Practices are identified as priority PCPs within the NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan. The updated PCP Plan and NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan will inform healthcare infrastructure within the LDP27.
- Digital Strategy: The Grampian Service Transformation through Digital: a Strategy 2020-25 sets out a roadmap for the adoption of new ways of working through new technology.
- Infrastructure Programme Board: Establishment of new Board to target investment on a prioritised and risk assessed basis. The development plans for Dr Gray's reports to this Board.

The spatial implications of the above such as any rationalisation or expansion of the healthcare estate will be reflected in the LDP27. In accord with the Place Principle, opportunities to share premises with other organisations will also be considered through the preparation of the LDP27.

Moray Transformation Projects – Dr Gray's Hospital and Home First

The Moray Transformation Programme Board (MTPB) is a non-statutory body that has been set up by NHS Grampian and HSC Moray to deliver two local transformation projects in health and social care:

- *Dr Gray's Hospital Transformation Programme*: Dr Gray's plays an important role in serving the people of Moray, Grampian and the North of Scotland. The programme is to set out a range of sustainable services that can, and should, be delivered at Dr Gray's as a General District Hospital. NHS Grampian are in discussion with NHS Highland to develop relationships to transform and continue current services. Strong links with Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (ARI), Aberdeen Maternity Hospital and Aberdeen Children's Hospital will continue to be built on. NHS Grampian adopted A Plan for the Future – Dr Gray's Hospital 2023-33 in June 2022. Work on a Dr Gray's Development Plan is progressing with a range of stakeholders including Moray Council. This will provide a plan for managing change across the site over the next 20 years and identifies facilities and services that can perhaps be relocated in a planned way to relieve pressure on the current Dr Gray's Hospital site. The spatial implications of this Plan will be reflected in the LDP.
- *Home First*: A strategic priority for the Moray Integration Joint Board (IJB) which is responsible for the planning and commissioning of health and social care services delivered through Moray HSCP. This project is based on the ethos that 'a person's own bed is often the best bed' and that people will recover better and faster at home. The programme aims to reduce admissions to long-term care, avoid unnecessary hospital admission and

attendance, support early discharge and reduce long-term care demand. The LDP can support this project through ensuring there is a supply of accessible, wheel-chair standard housing available within both the private and affordable housing markets. Accessible and specialist housing is covered in Schedule 8b.

Primary Care Premises – Medical Practices, NHS Dental Chairs and Community Pharmacies

NHS Grampian monitors the capacity of facilities through patient registration and space requirements (set out in the Scottish Government Premises Directions and Scottish Health Planning Notes) to determine whether existing facilities require expansion or new facilities are needed to cope with increased demand from new development. It is important to note that the floorspace allowances within the Premises Directions do not take account of all the additional services the practices are expected to provide in accord with the 2018 General Medical Services (GMS) Contract. This informs, and is informed by, the NHS Grampian Asset Management Plan and PCP Strategies and Plans.

Medical Practices

The following medical practices are currently working at, or beyond design capacity in Moray:

- **Elgin Housing Market Area (HMA)**
 - Maryhill (Elgin)
 - Linkwood (Elgin)
 - Fochabers (Fochabers)
 - Moray Coast (Lossiemouth)
- **Forres HMA**
 - Varis (Forres)
 - Culbin (Forres)
- **Keith HMA**
 - Keith Health Centre (Keith)
- **Speyside HMA**
 - Aberlour (Aberlour)
 - Rinnes (Dufftown)

Whilst the 2 medical practices in the Buckie HMA (Ardach and Seafield and Cullen) are currently operating within their design capacity, NHS Grampian and HSC Moray have identified that additional space may be required in the future due to population/development growth.

New premises require to be identified in Fochabers and Keith as there is no space within the current sites for expansion. Further consideration is also being given to the expansion of services within Elgin. These are priorities in the Asset Management Plan. The plans will be informed by the NHS Grampian PCP Plan. Any spatial implications arising from the Strategy and further healthcare infrastructure required to accommodate the growth set out in Schedule 8a will be reflected in the LDP27.

NHS Dental Chairs and Community Pharmacies

NHS Grampian have identified that the following NHS dental chairs and community pharmacies will be required to accommodate growth in the HMA's below:

Elgin - 5 dental chairs + 1 community pharmacy

Forres - 2 dental chairs + reconfiguration of existing pharmacy outlets

Speyside - 1 dental chair

NHS Grampian Property team along with HSC Moray are currently working with dental and pharmacy colleagues to review the dental and pharmacy requirements and delivery. Any spatial implications arising from this review and further healthcare infrastructure required to accommodate the growth set out in Schedule 8a will be reflected in the LDP27.

Infrastructure First Approach for Healthcare and Developer Obligations

NHS Grampian and HSC Moray work closely with Moray Council Strategic Planning and Development to deliver, as much as practically possible, an infrastructure first approach to healthcare infrastructure in Moray, and develop and maintain a robust evidence base to gather development obligations. NHS Grampian and HSC Moray play an important role in the LDP Delivery Group.

Where necessary, NHS Grampian identify an appropriate intervention and the associated developer obligation to be sought from an applicant to mitigate the impact of their development on the facility and resultant service. The developer obligation can be financial and/or land or property depending on the mitigation required. Sites that will be expected to contribute to healthcare infrastructure is currently set out in the LDP 2020 and associated Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance.

The delivery of larger extensions to existing premises or new medical facilities relies on Scottish Government funding along with developer obligations. All NHS Boards are required by the Scottish Government to follow a standard process in the development of all infrastructure and investment programmes and projects. Therefore, it can take several years to complete the various stages of this process and for funding to be identified. The funding mechanism has significant ramifications for the infrastructure first approach to healthcare facilities.

Developer obligations are time constrained as the majority are to be spent within 15 years of the date they have been received in Moray. Any delay in committing funding can increase the risk of developer obligations having to be paid back to the developer, and further funds from the public sector having to be sourced to fill the gap.

Both of the above matters and the implications for an infrastructure first approach to healthcare have been raised by NHS Grampian with the Scottish Government.

SPORT AND LEISURE

Sport and leisure assets can be both natural and built. Natural assets include walking and cycling trails, water-based activities such as sailing and kayaking, and parks/open spaces for informal recreation. Built assets include multi-purpose indoor sport and leisure facilities which can host swimming pools, fitness suites, and sports halls, specialist facilities such as ice rinks, climbing walls, bowling greens and outdoor built and leisure environments such as tennis courts, golf courses, athletic tracks and synthetic turf pitches. Built assets are owned and/or managed by a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

The benefits of physical activity and sports participation are well known and include helping to prevent and treat non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer as well as supporting mental health and social connections. The LDP27 will ensure that existing sports and leisure assets are protected, and that new infrastructure is identified to support the health and well-being of both existing and new residents.

Infrastructure planning for sports and leisure will be primarily informed by the Moray Sports and Leisure Strategy Capital Investment Plan 2022-32 which is currently being prepared by Education Resources and Communities Services with input from SportScotland. The purpose of the Investment Plan is to set out a strategic planned approach to sport and leisure capital development and investment in Moray focusing on major capital sport or leisure facilities that Moray Council has direct or connected responsibility for. The SportScotland Facility Planning Model report which will contribute towards the Plan provides an assessment of the relationship between the likely demand

for sport facilities in an area and their supply. This Plan and Model will help to inform the future sports and recreation infrastructure to be planned for Moray over the LDP27 period and beyond, and opportunities for funding including developer obligations and local priorities. However, the planning of Moray Council assets in the LDP27 will be largely determined by the available budget. The planning of non-Moray Council assets will be informed through consultation with the relevant groups/organisations/facilities and credible investment plans.

UTILITIES

Water and Waste Water

Scottish Water (SW) have a requirement to identify and provide new strategic capacity for water and wastewater to meet demand of all new housing development and the domestic requirements of commercial and industrial development. Factors such as the total number of proposed developments, their scale and their distance from the treatment works may impact on SW's ability to service them and therefore there is the potential that future growth investment may be required.

SW model scenarios for future growth based on local authority-provided housing development planning data and Scottish Government population projections. The model calculates expected future population at each water and wastewater treatment works across Scotland. When the demand for water or wastewater capacity exceeds the remaining available capacity at a treatment works then investment is required to investigate this and to understand the level of risk to service existing customers when connecting new developments to the network. Whilst the need for growth investment may be identified through this modelling work, SW will only invest once they are confident that the development is committed.

The capacity maps provide a high-level snapshot of current capacity (October 2023) of SW treatment works for initial screening and development planning purposes in Moray. The Water Treatment Works (WTW) and Wastewater Treatment (WWTW) that currently have capacity (as of October 2023), for growth are set out below. All other treatment works have the potential for future investment to facilitate development, which is a matter that will be addressed between SW and the developer separately.

Water Treatment Works (WTW)

- Glenlatterach - serves Glenlatterach, Pluscarden, Rafford, Forres, Whiteinch, Alves, Newton, Burghead, Cummington, Muirton, Elgin West and New Elgin
- Badentinian - serves Lossiemouth, Lochhill, Garmouth, Mosstodloch, Elgin East and Fochabers
- Herricks - serves Keith, Drummuir, Newmill and Aultmore

Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW)

- Moray West PFI – serves Elgin Lossiemouth, Hopeman and Burghead
- Moray East PFI – serves Cullen, Portknockie, Findochy, Buckie and Portgordon
- Archiestown WWTW – serves Archiestown.

Private water supplies and foul drainage will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. a lack of capacity or existing drainage problems within the area). This matter is not addressed through NPF4 policy, and a tailored approach will be considered for the LDP27. The site checklist criteria will verify whether developments are located in close proximity to the mains supply to avoid the need for private facilities.

Gas

Infrastructure planning for the gas network is largely reactive as capacity cannot be pre-booked. Where the existing infrastructure would not meet the requested capacity of a new site, reinforcement

would be required. Under the Scottish Government’s New Heating Standards legislation, as of 1st April 2024, new domestic and commercial properties which require a building warrant can no longer install gas boilers.

The cost of any reinforcement would either be met by Scottish Gas Networks (SGN), or in part or in full by the customer, dependant on an economic test being applied to the project. The economic test calculates transporter income against the reinforcement outlay to determine whether the reinforcement would be profitable in the longer-term. This is a commercial decision/transaction which does not involve the Council.

SGN are working to modernise the network by replacing all metallic mains that are within 30 meters of a property with plastic. The target for completion is 2030. Projects are currently being scoped and designed, and it is possible that work of this regard will be carried out within the Moray area. This is unlikely to have spatial implications for the LDP27 as the retrofit work will be carried out under SGN’s statutory powers.

Most developments will connect to downstream low-pressure infrastructure. Several reinforcements have been designed on the medium pressure network. Currently capacity is most constrained on the medium pressure network around Keith. Forres has capacity, although this is slightly limited. Elsewhere, the medium pressure network is robust. At the moment, the designed projects below are not required and would only go ahead if capacity requests on the network required so. As above, these projects are unlikely to have spatial implications for the LDP27. The projects are:

Location	Details
Forres	195 meters of reinforcement, parallel to main SE of Waterford Farm. Requirement dependant on load build-up of sites.
Forres	155 meters of reinforcement, parallel to existing main at 303654, 859453. Requirement dependant on load build-up of sites.
Elgin	1600m of reinforcement parallel to existing main: from 323021, 864058 to 322625, 862658. Requirement dependant on load build-up of sites.
Buckie	Either upgrading the capacity of the District Pressure Governor at Rathven, or 44 meters of reinforcement.
Buckie and to east of Buckie	6900 meters of reinforcement starting around 344111, 865699 and running north-east, parallel to existing main to Portknockie.

Electricity

Moray is located within the Grampian region of Scottish and Southern Energy Network (SSEN) distribution network. SSEN are currently working to transform and future proof the electricity network to enable legislated Net Zero targets. For example, the National Grid Energy Systems Operator (ESO) Future Energy Scenarios (FES) estimate that (winter) peak demand will be 123-147 GW in 2050 to deliver Net Zero compliance. This is more than double current (winter) peak demand which is 58.3 GW. SSEN Transmission are currently working to expand and upgrade the national transmission grid as part of an accelerated programme of works in the north of Scotland to meet the additional capacity needs within the grid to facilitate new renewable energy generation in the national grid system to enable Net Zero targets to be met.

The ESO Pathway to 2030 sets out projects for electricity transmission network infrastructure required to deliver the forecasted growth in renewable electricity across the UK. Within Moray, the upgrade projects include a new Beauly to Peterhead via Blackhillock and New Deer 400kV overhead line and a 400 kV Blackhillock 2 substation. Public consultation took place in April 2023 with a summary of the responses published in November 2023. Moray Council have been consulted on both proposals. Following the consultation SSEN Transmission have revisited the location of the 400kV substation, and this will now be located to the southeast of Keith. This means the new substation is situated within the Aberdeenshire Local Authority boundary. The overhead line route will be revised to the new proposed substation location.

NPF4 promotes national developments including the Strategic Renewable Electricity Generation and Transmission Infrastructure. The Keith and Blackhillock areas are coming under increasing development pressure, on a piecemeal basis, from development that supports the National Grid. Moray Council recently approved a Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework to make best use of the surrounding land and appropriately control opportunities arising from renewables associated with grid infrastructure and energy systems/storage in order that proposals are plan-led as advocated by the Scottish Government. Moray Council will continue to engage with SSEN on future grid infrastructure projects and this will be reflected in the LDP 27. Energy development including the growing pressures Moray is experiencing for renewable energy developments such as anaerobic digestion plants, solar arrays, windfarms, battery energy and storage systems (BESS), and data centres is addressed further in Schedule 5.

For developer-led projects, SSEN Transmission have a legal responsibility to connect developments to the electricity network and capacity cannot be pre-booked by the developer(s). For example, SSEN Transmission are currently building a 24km connection between Elchies (Rothes 3) windfarm (where the electricity is generated) to Blackhillock (where it is converted and distributed). The windfarm is developer-led and SSEN have a legal responsibility to connect this to the substation for distribution into the grid, which initiated the project for a 24km connection. The cost is a matter addressed between the utility organisation and the developer, and is either met by the utility organisation, or in part or in full by the developer. This means that SSEN Transmission are reactive to development proposals, and it is difficult to forward plan and apply an infrastructure first approach to this element of the operator's business.

DIGITAL

The Reaching 100% (R100) is a programme to enable access to superfast broadband with speeds of at least 30 Megabits per second (Mbps) to all homes and businesses in Scotland. The programme is funded via the UK and Scottish Government's and BT (the contract delivery partner). The R100 contract for the North was signed in December 2020 and overall contract build is currently expected to be complete 2027-28. The contract build is currently underway and live in all contract areas. The Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme (SBVS) is available for homes and businesses to access superfast broadband where no contract or commercial build is scheduled. A subsidy of up to £5000 is available to all eligible premises and covers direct installation costs carried out by a registered supplier. The scheme is available to homes and businesses in parts of Moray such as the Cabrach.

The R100 programme relies on fibre optic cables from properties to the exchange and availability and/or capacity at the exchange. The availability or capacity at an exchange is a commercial matter. However, the LDP 27 can ensure that the infrastructure is installed so that new homes and businesses can be served by superfast broadband should this become available in their area. Whilst NPF4 policy 24 Digital Infrastructure supports the delivery of digital infrastructure, it is considered that a tailored approach is required to explicitly set out what will be required from applicants to deliver the ambitions of the R100 programme and facilitate economic growth in Moray. This is a similar approach as the adopted LDP 2020 Primary Policy 3 Infrastructure and Services. Similarly, consultation with BT and

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) will inform whether sites and/or routes require to be safeguarded through the LDP27 for future exchanges and associated equipment.

Moray Council will be recruiting a digital project officer in early 2024. The post will work with digital infrastructure providers such as BT, HIE and communities to deliver the R100 programme and SBVS across Moray. Any associated spatial implications arising from the physical infrastructure necessary to implement the roll out of R100 will be reflected in the LDP27.

WASTE

NPF4 Policy 12 Zero Waste seeks to encourage, promote and facilitate development that is consistent with the waste hierarchy to reduce, reuse and recycle materials. The Council has a key role in delivering the necessary infrastructure in the right locations to achieve ambitious targets for reducing waste and increasing recycling.

The Scottish Government previously set a 60% household recycling target by 2020, and an all-waste recycling target of 70% by 2025. Scottish household recycling rates grew by an average of 9% per year between 2005 and 2010. However, in more recent years progress has slowed.

Waste Management Facilities

Despite the Council's best efforts to reduce residual waste through minimisation campaigns, recycling, composting and use of other treatments, a substantial quantity of residual waste that is generated still needs to be collected and treated. Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) cannot be landfilled after 2025 due to the Scottish BMW landfill ban. This was originally meant to come into force in 2021 but later deferred due to lack of capacity in alternative treatment methods.

Since mid-2023, the Council's non-recyclable waste has been processed at the NESS Energy from Waste (EfW) facility alongside waste from Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council. In terms of identification and investment in additional waste management facilities there are no plans to invest in new waste management infrastructure in the short to medium term.

The Council continue to operate the landfill site at present. Low levels of waste are currently being accepted by the Council from private sector waste producers. A decision has been made to begin the final capping and reinstatement procedures in 2024/25 as per conditions set by SEPA as the regulator.

Recycling Centres and facilities

The Council offers extensive kerbside recycling service for wastepaper and card, glass and tins and specific plastics alongside garden and food waste. There are currently 5 recycling centres located with Moray's main towns and 22 recycling points across the area in the smaller towns and villages and rural areas.

Figures released by Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) in the annual return showed households in Moray sent 57.8% of their waste to be recycled in 2022. The Council is top of the list for recycling rates nationally. The rate, which is recorded from kerbside collections and waste recycled at Moray's recycling centres, is up from 52.21% the previous year. The Council has implemented all the easier and most cost-effective measures to increase recycling rates. Given current budgetary pressures it is proving difficult to make a viable business case for further investment and successfully bid for Scottish Government funding. There are no short to medium term investments plans to support an increased recycling rate.

Spatial Implications

The Council's non-recyclable waste is no longer being landfilled and is being processed at the NESS energy from waste plant in Aberdeen. There are no plans for the identification or investment in additional waste management facilities in the short to medium term. The Council currently has the

highest recycling rate in Scotland, however all the easier and cost-effective measures to support recycling have been implemented already. Significant investment is needed to further increase recycling rates and it is proving difficult to develop viable business cases to attract Scottish Government funding. Moray Council will continue to monitor waste trends and ensure any emerging requirements for new waste management facilities or expansion of existing are identified early and fed into the LDP27.

CEMETERIES

There are 63 cemeteries and churchyards currently managed by Moray Council. The Council has maintained these over the years and systematically built new cemeteries or extended existing cemeteries based on location as opposed to long term need based on changing centres of population.

As a result of that approach there are cemeteries that have limited remaining new lair space available and now need to be extended or a new site identified and developed. In 2018 the average annual lair usage in Moray over the previous five years was 242 for new lairs, 337 lair re-openings for second or third interments and 97 cremated remains.

Moray Cemetery Provision Strategy 2018

A Cemetery Provision Strategy was developed by Moray Council in 2018 setting out a long-term sustainable approach to investment in cemeteries. The strategy identifies the remaining lair capacity in years based on average lair sales per cemetery over recent years. It seeks to ensure an adequate supply of burial space, to guide future planning and management of cemeteries in a co-ordinated, pro-active, and sustainable way.

The strategy identifies three cemeteries for investment over a ten-year period. Cemeteries at Keith and Lossiemouth are earmarked as requiring extensions. In Elgin, a new cemetery site is needed as the strategy estimated the lifespan of the existing cemetery in 2018 was 6 years. The priority is to deliver a new cemetery site in Elgin and preparatory work for this is underway. Based on targeting resources to deliver the new site in Elgin there are no short-term plans in progress at this stage to expand provision in Lossiemouth (11 years capacity in 2018) or Keith (13 years capacity in 2018). The Moray Local Development Plan has allocated land for the expansion of both cemeteries. The expansion of Lossiemouth cemetery is subject to intrusive ground investigation required to demonstrate suitability.

Considerations impacting on cemetery provision

There are alternative options that may impact on cemetery capacity. In Scotland in 2016 approximately 68% of the total number of deaths were cremated. In Moray in 2016, approximately 51% of the total numbers of deaths were cremated. Discussion with various stakeholders indicates that the variation in Moray from the national trend is primarily due to a large fishing and agricultural population who traditionally prefer burial. There are currently four crematoria in and around Moray. Moray Crematorium, near Buckie (privately owned), Inverness Crematorium, on (owned by Highland Council), Aberdeen Crematorium (owned by Aberdeen City Council). A small local crematorium in Burghead (privately owned) has been operating since 2019.

In terms of natural burial (sometimes referred to as green or woodland burial) in 2018 there were four privately owned facilities available for natural burial in and around Moray at Wilkies Wood-Findhorn, Cothiemuir Hill- Alford, Delliefure near Grantown-On-Spey and Cloverly Woods-Fyvie.

If there is a significant shift in Moray from traditional burial, then this will extend the lifespan of existing cemeteries and give longer lead times for the development of new sites.

Spatial Implications

The Council has a Cemetery Provision Strategy that was developed in 2018. The data underpinning the assumptions within it needs to be updated to ensure that the projections for expansion of identified cemeteries is still valid and to review whether there has been an increase in cremations or natural burials that would impact on future provision. It is anticipated that an update of the strategy will be undertaken in 2024/25. Any spatial implications in term of cemetery expansions etc. will be reflected in the LDP27.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Moray is home to two military bases, Kinloss Barracks and RAF Lossiemouth. These are important defence bases and play a key part in Moray (culturally, economically, and socially). Both Kinloss Barracks and RAF Lossiemouth are subject to safeguarding consultation zones. Development proposals within some use classes within safeguarding distances of the facilities require to be subject to consultation with Defence Infrastructure Organisation. The safeguarding zones apply to a wide range of development proposals which could have implications for the operation of military facilities and includes aspects such as height of buildings/ structures, use of reflective surfaces, refuse tips, nature reserves and other proposals which might attract birds. Proposals must not adversely impact on military operations or capability. MLDP2020 policy EP15 is specifically related to Ministry of Defence Safeguarding to ensure the impacts on the bases are considered. Through the Call for Ideas the Defence Infrastructure have noted the retention of this policy would be welcomed. In addition to the safeguarding consultation zones noise impacts from the air base is an important consideration for development proposals. The Military Aviation Noise Contour Programme and associated noise contours are therefore taken into account when considering development proposals.

The needs of service personnel and their families in terms of housing has been considered within Schedule 8b Specialist Housing and is also a consideration for education, health and other services which are discussed within this schedule.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

- Local authority education, sport and leisure, transport, waste and housing colleagues. Council Services were integral to drafting the summary of evidence and their comments on the finalised schedule and review of stakeholder responses have been incorporated.
- NHS Grampian and Moray Health and Social Care Partnership – NHS Grampian and Moray HSCP have provided a joint Statement of Agreement with some minor comments which are included in the Statement of Agreement section.
- Utility providers – Statements of Agreement have been received from Scottish Water, SGN and SSEN Transmission and SSEN Distribution. SGN and SSEN Transmission have provided factual updates which have been incorporated into the Schedule. SSEN Distribution have provided further information and additional evidence document/links which is included in the Statement of Agreement section. SGN has provided additional evidence which is included in the Statement of Agreement section.
- Representative bodies of housing providers and landowners – Homes for Scotland have identified an area of agreement and areas of dispute. These are provided in the Statement of Agreement and Dispute sections along with the Council’s response. No response has been received from Housing Associations.
- Sport Scotland – Sport Scotland have provided a Statement of Agreement with additional comments which are provided in the Statement of Agreement section.
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) – No response received.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

For the LDP27, it is proposed to:

- Consider a tailored approach to provide clarity on the types, level and location of infrastructure necessary to support development and the sites that will be expected to contribute via developer obligations. This provides clarity and certainty to the development industry and communities as to what infrastructure is to be provided to support growth.
- As far as practically possible, identify how, when and by whom infrastructure will be delivered and priorities. The balance between the level of information provided within the LDP, Delivery Programme and associated planning guidance will be considered during the preparation of the Proposed Plan. The timeframe for review will influence this (e.g. rates, exemptions, etc. may be more suited to planning guidance given this can be updated quicker to reflect changing local circumstances, inflation, etc.). This will be informed by the LDP Delivery Group and other key infrastructure stakeholders.
- Where necessary, set out the spatial implications of infrastructure to support development (e.g. safeguard land for a new school or healthcare facility) within the Proposed Plan, and engage with key infrastructure providers to identify opportunities for sharing resources, for example via community hubs.
- The new LDP must consider the implications of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation Consultation Zones when reviewing development sites and also consider if policy EP15 requires to be retained to ensure impacts on the military bases are considered.

Statements of Agreement

SCOTTISH GAS NETWORKS (SGN)

SGN are in agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence provided within the schedule. They have provided the additional information below which the Council are agreeable to including as further evidence to inform the LDP27. The implications for the LDP27 are that there will likely be a requirement to route new hydrogen pipeline infrastructure through Moray, linking hydrogen production (Cromarty, Speyside, etc.) to users whether domestic or industrial and commercial. This will need a specific corridor and would be assessed under a pre-FEED study, as SGN are currently working on with H2 Caledonia.

SGN own and operate the gas distribution networks in Scotland and the South-East of England, supplying energy to 5.9 million homes and businesses through over 74,000km of pipeline infrastructure. The UK Government has legally committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, with the Scottish Government committing to the same reduction by 2045. As part of this transition to net zero, demand for unabated natural gas must be phased out and replaced by low carbon and ultimately renewable energy sources. This will require the transition of natural gas connections to low carbon alternatives. SGN are working in collaboration with the other gas networks to provide evidentiary support for UK Government's 2026 heat policy decision about hydrogen's future role in home heating to support Net Zero. SGN are undertaking an extensive programme of R&D, demonstration, and trial projects to prepare for and enable the system transition of the gas networks to 100% hydrogen. These projects include the Local Transmission System (LTS) Futures Programme¹ and H100 Fife² hydrogen neighbourhood. LTS Futures will research, develop, test and evidence the compatibility of LTS assets, pipelines, associated plant and ancillary fittings with hydrogen – this is important as the LTS consists of high-pressure pipelines that distribute gas directly to industry and feed the lower pressure gas networks that are used by homes and businesses. H100

¹ <https://www.sgn.co.uk/about-us/future-of-gas/lts-futures>

² <https://www.h100fife.co.uk/>

is a world-first demonstration that will bring 100% green hydrogen gas to provide clean heat to around 300 homes in Buckhaven and Denbeath.

In addition, in preparation for the conversion of the gas networks in Scotland to 100% hydrogen, SGN has a number of system transformation projects which are developing the plans, roadmaps, and infrastructure requirements. In Dumfries and Galloway, SGN are investigating the potential for green hydrogen production from curtailed renewable generators and its implications for new hydrogen infrastructure and the repurposing of existing gas assets in the southwest of Scotland. In North East and Central Scotland we have a pre-FEED project, H2 Caledonia, which is designing and routing new hydrogen transmission pipelines to connect hydrogen production, storage and network injection locations. These new pipelines would form a hydrogen backbone, providing the hydrogen required to support the phased conversion of gas distribution networks which would ultimately allow for hydrogen use in a domestic setting (as seen in H100 Fife). H2 Caledonia's Pre-FEED project and its future FEED phase, represent the technical and commercial development of SGN's hydrogen rollout strategy, which is aiming to demonstrate and ensure the timely delivery of the system transformation to hydrogen once the required policy decisions are made.

SSEN DISTRIBUTION

SSEN Distribution are in agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence base and have asked for the following additional information to be considered:

- As the rate of decarbonisation accelerates, SSEN is taking a more strategic view to our network development process to meet the requirements set out in our Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES). This annual publication models how load on our network may evolve in four development scenarios out to 2050.
- Distribution Future Energy Scenarios: 2022 reports available here: [SSEN Distribution Future Energy Scenarios - Regen](#); 2023 reports available April 2024
- Network Development Plans: [Network Capacity Information - SSEN](#)
- NeRDA (Near Real-time Data Access portal): [Near Real-time Data Access \(NeRDA\) portal - SSEN](#)
- Open Data Portal: [SSEN Distribution Data Portal](#)

SPORTSCOTLAND

SportScotland are in agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence base. They have provided additional comments, information and a data source below. The Council will include school facilities within their sport and leisure evidence base for the LDP and will use the MySport application to source club and facility data to engage with relevant groups to inform the LDP.

For 'sport and leisure' the evidence base includes reference to:

- Moray Sports and Leisure Strategy Capital Investment Plan 2022-32
- SportScotland Facilities Planning Model
- Consultation with groups involved in non-Moray Council assets.

We support these inclusions, and in particular highlight the importance of consultation with sport clubs and communities within the Council area.

School facilities in Moray will be contributing important spaces for community sport outwith curricular use and should feed across to the 'sports and leisure' evidence base.

SportScotland holds clubs and some facilities data as part of our 'MySport' application available through our website should this be of use to LA partners: <https://mysport.sportscotland.org.uk/>

HOMES FOR SCOTLAND

The summary of implications section states the following:

“Consider a tailored approach to provide clarity on the types, level and location of infrastructure necessary to support development and the sites that will be expected to contribute via developer obligations. This provides clarity and certainty to the development industry and communities as to what infrastructure is be provided to support growth.”

This is a reasonable approach in principle. It will be important that practical and viable solutions are designed, informed by discussions with the relevant stakeholders.

Statements of Dispute

HOMES FOR SCOTLAND

Healthcare

The information provided on healthcare would benefit from better referencing and improved levels of detail.

Pages 11 and 12 of the PDF identify *“medical practices [that] are currently working at, or beyond design capacity in Moray.”* However, it is not explained where this information is sourced from nor is information provided on the number of patients relative to capacity or how the capacity figure has been calculated. As such it is not possible to understand how these conclusions have been reached or the scale of any exceedance of capacity.

Similarly, there are conclusions further down on pdf p. 12, as follows *“Grampian have identified that the following NHS dental chairs and community pharmacies will be required to accommodate growth in the HMA’s below:”* this should either cross refer to where this detailed evidence is contained or include it within the proforma. It’s important that evidence for any such conclusions and the assumptions they rely on are clearly set out so the evidence can be understood.

Council Response: As set out in the Schedule, NHS Grampian monitors the capacity of facilities through patient registration and space requirements to determine whether existing facilities require expansion or new facilities are needed to cope with increased demand from new development. The detailed breakdown Homes for Scotland are seeking cannot be provided for confidentiality reasons. It is on this basis that Moray Council consider the information presented to be a sufficient evidence base.

Education

The information provided on education would benefit from further explanation of the evidence and assumptions used.

We disagree with the assumption of an 80% working capacity for primary schools. This is lower than the level used by other local authorities we are familiar with and has not been justified. There are many primary schools across Scotland which operate comfortably above this proportion and indeed Secondary Schools which can operate at above 90% of planning capacity. The reasons for choosing these thresholds and associated evidence should be set out. Consideration should also be given to the period of time which schools are projected to exceed their perceived working capacity.

Council Response: As set out within the Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance the threshold for primary schools is for planning not working capacity. This threshold was consulted upon through the review of the Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance in 2019. The research that informed this threshold illustrated that 80% planning capacity equated to 90% working capacity for the majority of primary schools. Planning capacity is considered to be a more appropriate method to assess impact as it fluctuates less than working capacity, which can change on an annual basis. Any changes to

capacity thresholds will be addressed through subsequent reviews of the supplementary guidance which will be subject to public consultation. This allows for regular reviews to be undertaken to reflect local circumstances and changes in Council policies and strategies, that cannot wait for a 10-year LDP review. It is on this basis that Moray Council consider the information presented to be a sufficient evidence base.

The document lists the 2022 school roll projections of evidence. However, we note that previous school roll projections have significantly exceeded the actual school rolls as the table below indicates. Primary roll forecasts have been 16% to 19% higher than actual rolls by the end of the full forecast period. There is a lower but still substantial exceedance for secondary schools, which are generally easier to project. The table below compares the 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2019 projections against recorded school rolls in 2023.

Projection	Difference between projected rolls and actual roll*									% over in final year
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
2014 PS	53	156	381	587	715	889	1096	1319		19%
2014 HS	-12	89	97	297	379	408	438	580		11%
2015 PS		-1	205	386	448	518	646	804	1071	16%
2015 HS		85	73	271	311	319	304	399	541	10%
2016 PS			18	216	335	467	655	845	1086	16%
2016 HS			18	200	196	189	172	257	436	8%
2019 PS						75	190	226	359	5%
2019 HS						-19	-3	99	196	4%

* Positive number indicates projections were higher than the actual roll, negative lower

In light of this, it would be helpful if more information could be provided to explain the assumptions underpinning the school roll forecasts and a step-by-step guide to the methodology which has been used. Furthermore, the Council should explain how it has accounted for the sharp decline in birth rates over the past decade in its projections and the pupil product ratios it uses.

Council Response: *The School Roll Forecast document sets out the methodology for calculating the school roll. The methodology and assumptions made are a decision for the Education Authority and the role of the planning system is to address the spatial implications arising from this. As set out in the SRF methodology, birth rates are based on projections provided by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the limitations of forecasting due to unknown external factors are acknowledged in the document. It should be noted that house build completions can play a significant role in the SRF, particularly where annual completions are under or overestimated by housebuilders. Pupil product ratios are addressed in the Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance. It is on this basis that Moray Council consider the information presented to be a sufficient evidence base.*

Summary of Implications

This following section of the summary states the following:

“As far as practically possible, identify how, when and by whom infrastructure will be delivered and priorities. The balance between the level of information provided within the LDP, Delivery Programme and associated planning guidance will be considered during the preparation of the Proposed Plan. The timeframe for review will influence this (e.g. rates, exemptions, etc. may be more suited to planning guidance given this can be updated quicker to reflect changing local circumstances, inflation, etc.). This will be informed by the LDP Delivery Group and other key infrastructure stakeholders.”

One of the purposes of the recent planning reform was to front load the system and deliver greater certainty of delivery. This passage reads as if the intention may be to delay publishing key information which will impact upon viability until after the LDP has been adopted. It is understandable that some details may be revised over the course of a 10-year LDP. However, this does not preclude the LDP from setting out clear details at the outset rather than deferring these to a later date and leaving question marks over the potentially deliverability of sites.

Council Response: The LDP will provide as much certainty as practically possible on infrastructure required to facilitate development, however as set out in the Schedule there are factors outwith the control of the Council and other infrastructure providers that will dictate delivery and priorities. Given the 10-year timeframe for the LDP it is considered that planning guidance will be a more appropriate means for some information as this can be updated on a more regular basis to reflect local circumstances. It should be noted that the Council offers a free developer obligation assessment service where developers are encouraged to engage with the planning authority at the earliest opportunity to ascertain the likely level of developer obligations that will be required for a development proposal so that this can inform development appraisals and the purchase price of land. It is on this basis that Moray Council consider the information presented to be a sufficient evidence base.

Issue: Topic / Place	10b. Transport
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • section 15(5)(d) The infrastructure of the district (including communications, transport and drainage systems for the supply of water and energy, and health care and education facilities); • section 15(5)(e) How that infrastructure is used; <p>The Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation 9(2)(e) The planning authority are to have regard to the following plans and strategies, insofar as relating to the local development plan area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. The national waste management plan; II. Any regional transport strategy; and III. Any local transport strategy.
Links to Evidence	<p>Strategies and Reports</p> <p>CD078 Moray Council Active Travel Strategy 2022 to 2027</p> <p>CD075 Moray Council Active Travel Strategy 2022 to 2027 – Annual Update 2023</p> <p>CD107 Moray Council Road Safety Plan to 2030 (draft)</p> <p>CD108 Public EV charging – Moray Strategy & Expansion Plan</p> <p>CD109 Moray Hydrogen Strategy</p> <p>CD110 Elgin Transport Strategy</p> <p>CD001 Moray Local Development Plan 2020 Volume 1 -Spatial Strategy (page 11)</p> <p>CD111 National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2)</p> <p>CD112 Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2)</p> <p>CD113 A96 Dualling Inverness to Aberdeen DMRB Stage 1 Assessment Report</p> <p>CD114 A96 Dualling Hardmuir to Fochabers DMRB Stage 2 Assessment Report</p> <p>CD115 A96 Corridor Review – Stakeholder and Public Engagement Consultation Report (December 2022)</p> <p>CD116 A96 Corridor Review – Initial Appraisal: Case for Change (December 2022)</p> <p>CD117 HiTRANS Regional Transport Strategy (Case for Change Report)</p> <p>CD076 Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland - A route map to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030</p> <p>CD118 Transport and Travel in Scotland 2021: Results from the Scottish Household Survey</p> <p>Datasets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Transport Statistics - All editions • 2011 Census Data Journey to Work and Car Ownership – Moray Data • 2011 Census Data Mode Share for journeys to work and education – Moray Data

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian and Cycle counts from permanent counters on active travel routes within and between settlements in Moray • ‘Hands Up’ Scotland Survey for Travel Mode to School • Bus Services, Routes, Capacity and Utilisation – Local Information • Rail Services, Capacity and Utilisation (to be supplied by Transport Scotland Mobile Phone Data) • Traffic counts from permanent counters on roads within and between settlements in Moray • Traffic counts from permanent counters on Trunk Roads within Moray • Ad-hoc Traffic Counts undertaken for specific development sites and/or transport schemes • Traffic counts undertaken in 2023 for the update of the Elgin Traffic Model • ANPR surveys undertaken in 2023 for the update of the Elgin Traffic Model • INRIX Data (to be supplied by Transport Scotland) • LATIS Data (to be supplied by Transport Scotland) • Moray STATS19 Accident Data • ChargePlace Scotland - Number and location of publicly available electric vehicle charging points in Moray
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National Planning Framework 4 Context

NPF4 Policy 13 seek to encourage, promote and facilitate developments that prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport for everyday travel and reduce the need to travel unsustainably.

LDPs should prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes. The spatial strategy should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy and sustainable investment hierarchy by making best use of existing infrastructure and services. LDPs should promote a place-based approach to consider how to reduce car-dominance. Consideration should be given to the type, mix and use of development; local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods; car ownership levels; the accessibility of proposals and allocations by sustainable modes; and the accessibility for users of all abilities.

LDPs should be informed by an appropriate and effective transport appraisal undertaken in line with relevant transport appraisal guidance. Plans should be informed by evidence of the area’s transport infrastructure capacity, and an appraisal of the spatial strategy on the transport network. This should identify any potential cumulative transport impacts and deliverable mitigation proposed to inform the plan’s infrastructure first approach.

Summary of Evidence

This section explores the evidence associated with the movement of people and goods in Moray, identifies the information which has been gathered and assessed, and its relevance to the Local Development Plan (LDP). Conclusions are drawn from the information which will inform the approach to be adopted in the review of the LDP.

The Council is committed to undertaking a proportionate Transport Appraisal to support and inform the development of the new LDP. Budget has been allocated for this process and is currently being utilised to update the 2018 Elgin Traffic Model. New traffic counts were undertaken in Elgin during 2023 to inform the update, along with new Automatic Number Plate Recognition surveys. Work is currently on-going to calibrate and validate the updated model. Once this process is completed it will be shared with Transport Scotland.

There are some datasets which are aged or have yet to be obtained from Transport Scotland's sources e.g. 2022 Census Data, Moray specific data from the LATIS model etc. During the preparation of the Transport Appraisal, the Council will work with Transport Scotland to identify and obtain any new relevant data which can be used to inform the appraisal.

Information is also awaited on the outcome of the A96 Corridor Review, which passes east-west through Moray. Once the findings of this review are known, they will be used to inform the Transport Appraisal and the development of the new LDP.

Transport related evidence from public consultation undertaken to date is presented and will be updated as further engagement on the Local Development Plan takes place with both Stakeholders and the Public.

The scope of this evidence is limited to information relevant to land use planning and implications of the evidence for the spatial strategy of the LDP, focussing on significant issues that require to be addressed by the LDP, and what is relevant e.g. the LDP has no influence on the setting of fares for public transport, but does have an influence on where new housing/development is located and how it is designed to enable access to available public transport services.

The conclusions drawn in this section are cross-cutting in nature, reflecting NPF4's policy direction in addressing the climate crisis as an overarching theme, interaction between place and movement and the need to provide infrastructure upfront to support travel behaviour change. Dependant policies are:

- Policy 1 Tackling the Climate and Nature Crisis
- Policy 13 Sustainable Transport
- Policy 14 Design, Quality and Place
- Policy 15 Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Policy 18 Infrastructure First

Identification of Datasets

Datasets have been identified from work associated with previous transportation studies and strategies, internet searches, data held by Moray Council Transportation, public transport operators, Transport Scotland and nationally available datasets identified through internet searches.

Datasets Considered

Given the considerable body of transport related data and information available, the documents and datasets in the 'Links to Evidence' section above are those deemed most relevant and sufficient to inform the development of the LDP. The focus is on identifying from the evidence where there are land use planning implications for the LDP, and what the spatial strategy for the LDP needs to address in terms of spatial distribution of development and site selection criteria across Moray.

Analysis

Moray is a rural local authority in North East Scotland which has an estimated population of 96,410 (National Record Scotland Mid 2021 Estimate), concentrated around the main towns of Elgin, Forres, Buckie, Keith and Lossiemouth. Secondary settlements are 'daisy-chained' along the river Spey valley (Aberlour, Craigellachie, Dufftown and Rothies) and along the Moray coast to the east of the River Spey (Portgordon, Findochty, Portknockie and Cullen). Beyond the main and secondary settlements there are dispersed villages and rural settlements, along with clusters of individual dwellings within the countryside.

The Map below shows the areas of Moray which fall into the various Scottish Government Urban/Rural classifications and demonstrates the rurality of Moray along with the areas where there are concentrations of population, employment and services.



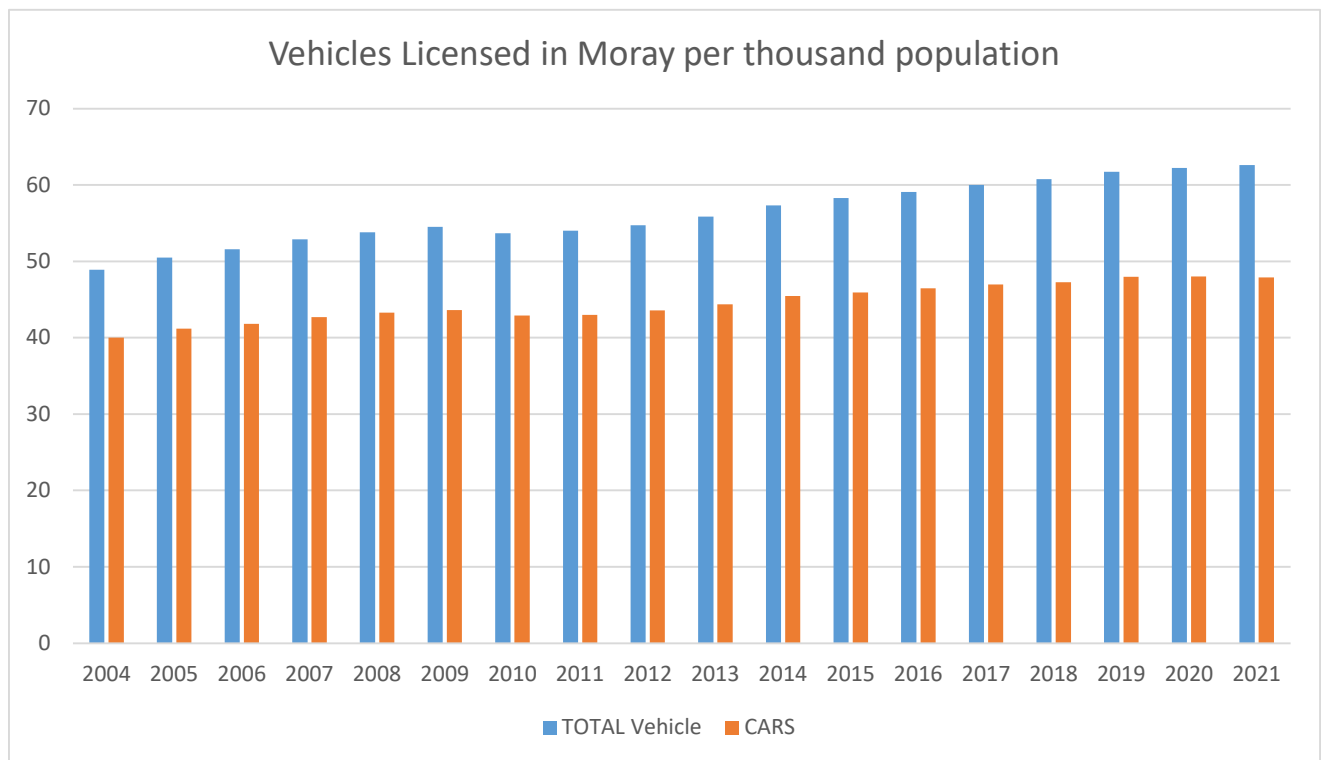
The main towns in Moray are accessed via the Strategic Road Network which includes the A96 (T) Aberdeen - Inverness Road and the A95 (T) Aviemore - Keith Road. The A96 (T) travels east-west across Moray passing through two main settlements, Keith and Elgin, and a number of smaller settlements, e.g. Alves. The A96 (T) also passes close to the settlements of Forres, Lhanbryde, Mosstodloch and Fochabers. The A95 (T), which links Moray to the A9 (T) and the South, is a key transport route for many of Moray's primary industries, e.g. distilleries and food production. The A95 (T) passes through the main settlements of Aberlour and Keith, and close to the settlement of Craigellachie.

Beyond the trunk road network, the main routes of strategic importance within Moray are the A98 from Fochabers to Cullen, the A941 from Dufftown to Lossiemouth and the A940 from Forres to Grantown. The A941 is an important link between Elgin and the surrounding area, including the A95 (T) and the South. To a lesser extent, the A940 is a key route linking the western part of Moray, around Forres, to the A95 (T) and the South. The A98 links Moray with Banff and Buchan and serves the town of Buckie and many smaller coastal communities.

As Moray is a rural local authority, car ownership levels are relatively high (81%) compared to much of the rest of Scotland (69%). (<https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/> 2011 census data).

In Transport and Travel in Scotland (TATIS), data from the Scottish Household Survey (2021), shows that 9% of households in Moray do not have a car/van available to them. This is lower than the national rate of 19.7% of households, but to be expected with large rural areas, and even so means more than 3,960 households across the area that do not have access to a car/van.

Data from [Scottish Transport Statistics 2022](#) (shown in the graph below) highlights that since 2004, car ownership per 1000 population has increased, with a slight reduction during 2010 to 2012 when the implications of the global financial crisis during 2008/2009 were still having an economic impact in Moray.



Public Transport- Bus

The rural nature of Moray also impacts on the availability of public transport for outlying areas when compared to other parts of Scotland. Public transport services in Moray are generally focussed on the main settlements of Elgin, Forres, Buckie, Keith and Lossiemouth and along the A96 (T) corridor.

In terms of local bus services, the Scottish Household Survey (2021) shows a high proportion of Moray respondents that had not used a local bus service in the past month – 85%, which compares to a national rate of just 71%. This may in part be due to the low levels of accessibility by public transport in Moray which was presented in the A96 Corridor Review Case for Change (see table below).

Area	Total Population of Area (16+)	Emergency Department Hospital	GP	Higher Education	Large Food Store	Shopping Centre	High School
A96 Corridor Review Transport Appraisal Study Area	456,943	36%	80%	47%	76%	53%	64%
Aberdeen City	193,271	57%	99%	74%	89%	85%	87%
Aberdeenshire	106,556	1%	46%	3%	51%	10%	52%
Moray	79,673	22%	68%	27%	67%	19%	38%
Highland	77,443	46%	88%	58%	87%	68% 6	67%

Accessibility to Key Services by Public Transport in under 30 minutes : [A96 Corridor Review Initial Appraisal Case for Change \(2022\) Table 5](#)

In order to address public transport accessibility away from the main settlements and A96 corridor, Moray Council operate and are expanding a Demand Responsive Transport service 'mConnect' http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_125954.html The expansion of this service seeks to fill the gaps in provision in rural areas and encourage more people to use public transport.

The key aims of the project are to increase the numbers of people using public transport to get to and from rural areas to places of work, education etc, reduce the number of people facing transport barriers to employment, education, or recreation, and reduce the environmental impact of transport in the area. Services expansion including longer operating hours (including peak hours) will increase mobility and access to work, education, and recreation for all residents regardless of economic status, geography, age or ability. The project seeks to reduce social isolation with particular benefits to groups who are otherwise isolated, notably people who are older, people who are younger, those at home with young children and lower income households.

The current percentage occupation on mConnect services is shown in the table below. Whilst data on the utilisation of commercial services which operate within and pass through Moray has been sought, the operation has not provided this key data. There is therefore currently no data on the capacity of those services. Efforts to attain this data from the commercial operator are on-going and, if obtained, the data will be used to inform the Transport Appraisal and site selection process.

Percentage Occupation of 'mConnect' transport services				
Route	Operator	Annual loadings from Sep 22 to Aug 23	Annual Capacity	% Occupation
Forres Town Service	Moray Council m. Connect	12067	29120	41%
Elgin - Urquhart - Garmouth - Kingston	Moray Council m. Connect	12199	85800	14%
Aberlour - Carron	Moray Council m. Connect	56	5320	1%
Tomintoul - Grantown on Spey	Moray Council m. Connect	699	2912	24%
Keith - Dufftown - Tomintoul	Moray Council m. Connect	631	4368	14%
Elgin - Archieston - Knockando - Aberlour	Moray Council m. Connect	1732	29120	6%

Public Transport – Rail

The Aberdeen to Inverness Railway passes east-west through Moray with stations at Keith, Elgin and Forres. As part of the improvement programme for this railway line within Moray there have been new sections of twin-tracks to enable trains to pass at more locations, including at stations, improvements to signalling, the

extension of platforms at Elgin station and the relocation of Forres Station, which included the closure of the Waterford Road level crossing.

The A96 Corridor Review Case for Change (December 2022) pages 122 and 123 identifies options to be taken forward which include the introduction of rail freight terminals in Keith and Elgin, further line speed improvements to cut journey times, the provision of passing loops to enable more frequent passenger services and enhancing the parking facilities at railway stations between Aberdeen and Inverness with the aim of encouraging the use of low carbon infrastructure for medium and long distance travel along the A96 corridor. As these options are further developed, they will be considered as part of the review of the LDP e.g. safeguarding any land identified for rail freight terminals at Keith and Elgin.

The Council currently does not have access to any data for the use of the stations and rail network within Moray. It is anticipated that data from Transport Scotland may be available in the future to indicate the numbers of passengers using each station.

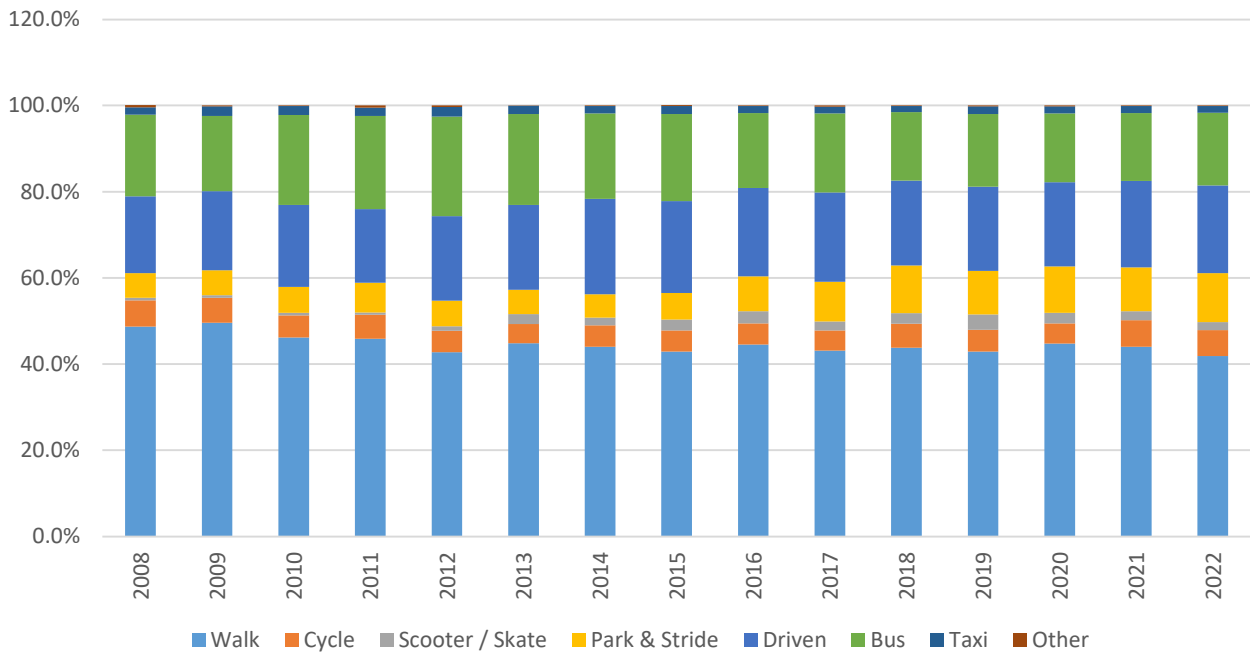
Active Travel

Moray Council are committed to providing infrastructure to support walkers, wheelers and cyclists. Despite being a rural local authority Moray has relatively high statistics for Active Travel as a 'main mode of travel' than a large percentage of other local authority areas in Scotland ([Moray Council Active Travel Strategy 2022 to 2027](#)). Recent data has continued to see increases (when compared to 2019 data) in numbers of pedestrians and cyclists on routes which are monitored in built up areas and on routes which provide connections to settlements in rural areas.

In the past five years 20 kilometres of new all-weather path has been provided along the old Speyside railway alignment (Speyside Way) from the boundary with Highland Council to the south of Cragganmore to Craigellachie, connecting a number of settlements and individual properties along its route to provide access to employment and everyday facilities. An application to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund has been made for the extension of this route to connect Rothes to Craigellachie, along with improvements to the Spey Bay to Portgordon section of the Speyside Way and onwards to Buckie. This is part of 'The Moray Routes: Bright Futures Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plan'. Data from the monitoring sites along Cragganmore to Craigellachie section of this route are included in the [Active Travel Strategy Annual Update 2023 page 6](#).

Recent Sustrans 'Hands Up Scotland Survey' results for Moray Schools show a decline in the numbers of pupils walking to school. However there have been increasing number of pupils cycling to school ([Active Travel Strategy Annual Update 2023 page 6](#)) which is likely to be a result of the high numbers of pupils receiving Bikeability training and the provision of new cycling and improved infrastructure on some routes to schools.

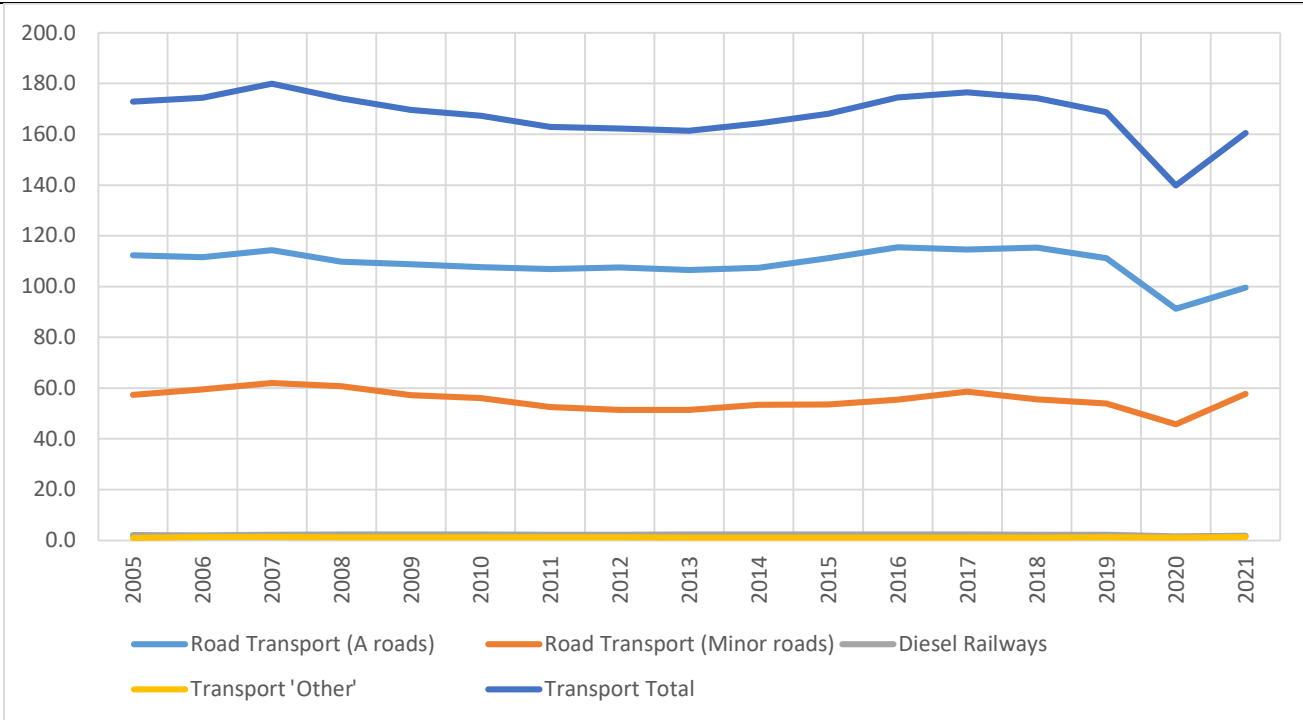
Moray travel modes - all school types (excluding nursery)



2022 Census data on journeys to employment and education has yet to be published. It is anticipated that this data will not be available until 2025. It is therefore proposed to utilise Scottish House Survey Travel Diary data in addition to the 2011 published census data within the Transport Appraisal. Should the 2022 Census data become available prior to the completion of the Transport Appraisal, then discussions will take place with Transport Scotland as to how best to incorporate the data.

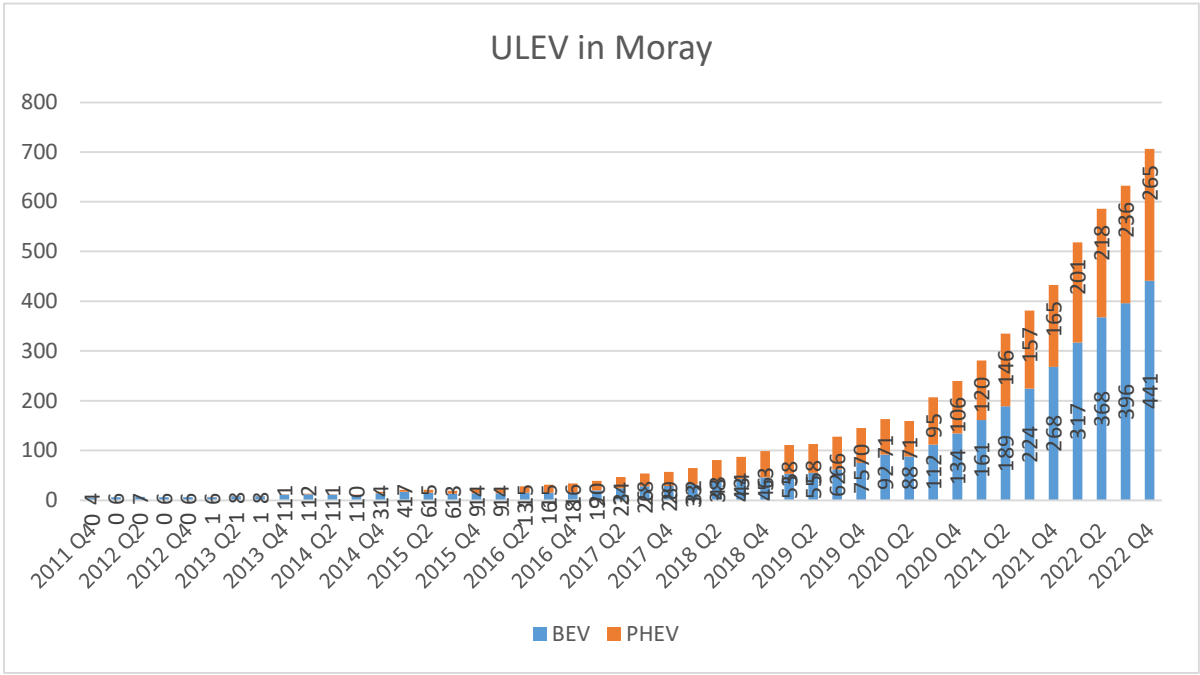
Alternative Fuelled Vehicles

Schedule 1 Climate Change sets out the sources and scale of carbon emissions in Moray. The rural nature of Moray leads to a high volume of vehicular traffic across the region, resulting in significant carbon emissions. Moray’s rail network lacks electrification, and the absence of efficient rail freight handling facilities contributes to a high number of HGV journeys within and passing through the region.

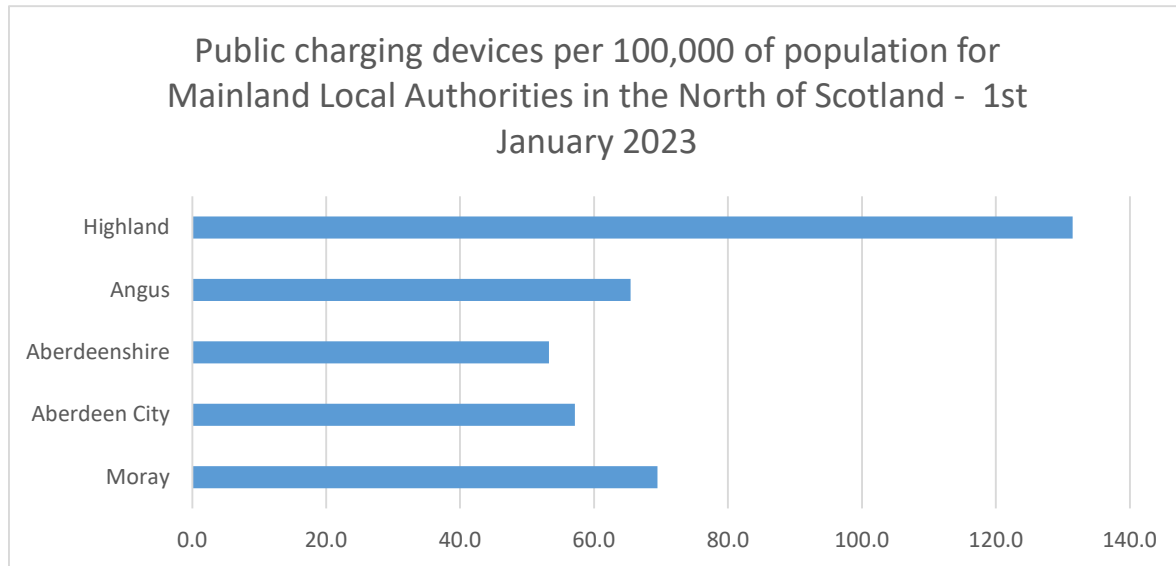


Moray Local Authority Area_ territorial carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions estimates 2005-2021 (kt CO2e) - [Source: Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy - UK local authority and regional estimates of carbon dioxide emissions.](#)

Moray Council submitted their [Public EV charging – Moray Strategy & Expansion Plan](#) to Scottish Government in 2023. The Council have joined the Pathfinder Project (alongside Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Highland Councils) to secure an operator and expansion partner for the provision of charging infrastructure. In Moray, in keeping with the rest of Scotland, ownership of electric and hybrid vehicles is rising. Over the past five years (between 2017 and 2022) the number of vehicles registered in Moray has increase from 197 to 2442 (an increase of 1140%) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vehicle-licensing-statistics-april-to-june-2022>.



The current LDP already makes provision to ensure that new development provides charging facilities for residents/visitors/employees. The Pathfinder Project will ensure that publically available charging points continue to be available and the charging network expand. The strategy and expansion include sites for new chargers in remote locations, within housing areas which have shared parking areas and on-street locations in historic residential areas with no off-street parking.



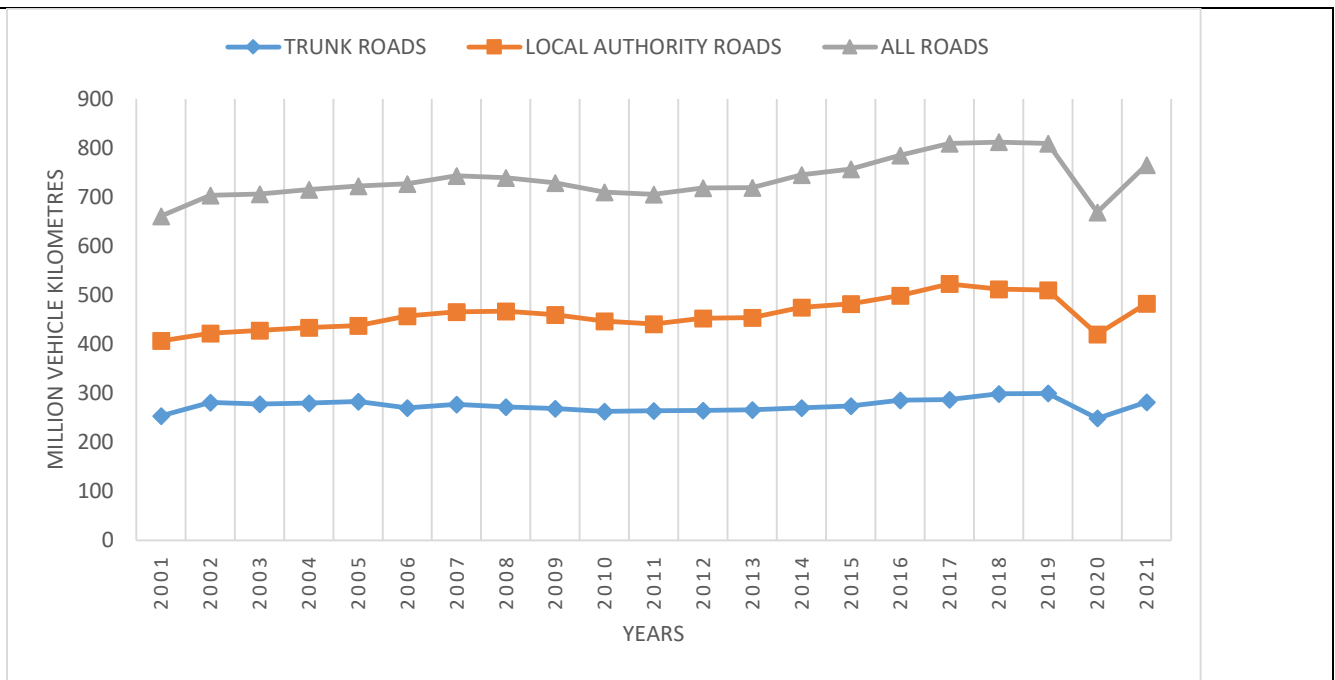
The Moray Hydrogen Strategy 2022 identifies that hydrogen, rather than electrification is likely to be the preferred option for decarbonisation of heavy goods vehicles (HGV's) and buses. The Strategy identifies an opportunity to create a Hydrogen Corridor through Moray by considering hydrogen refuelling stations along the route of the A96. Keith (near Blackhillock) offers a location approximately halfway between Aberdeen and Inverness. It is also important to consider the transport movements from A95 towards the Central Belt, primarily from the whisky industry, and a fuelling zone along this corridor. Initial pilot projects have been identified with potential for hydrogen production and refuelling at the following locations in the short-term: Lossiemouth, Aberlour, Buckie Harbour and Elgin. Work on developing these projects and supporting a hydrogen economy within Moray is ongoing.

The outcomes of this work, along with the expansion of the publicly available electric vehicle charging network, will be considered as part of the Transport Appraisal and inform the site selection process.

Reducing Car-Kilometres

Scottish Government have set a target of a 20% reduction in car-kilometres across Scotland by 2030. The means to achieving this target are set out in the [Route Map to achieve a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030](#) and Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhood Draft Planning Guidance. Moray Council is supportive of active travel/public transport provision and parking management measures as outlined within the Routemap as way to support a reduction in car kilometres travelled and has set out its commitment to promoting these in this schedule. For rural local authorities with dispersed settlements and limited public transport provision, some of the interventions available to more densely populated areas e.g. Workplace Parking Levy, are not applicable. However, reducing the need to travel long distances to access services through the provision of shared and mobile services and improving digital connectivity is something that can be pursued as set out in Schedule 7 Local Living.

The following graph from [Scottish Transport Statistics - All editions](#) shows the increasing level of vehicle-kilometres on the trunk and local roads within Moray (million vehicle kilometres) from 2001 to 2021, with an obvious decrease in 2020 and rebound in 2021.



As part of the Transport Appraisal the Council will work with Transport Scotland to identify the routes available for Moray to contribute to the target and whether the reduction in Moray should be 20% or a figure which reflects the geography, settlement patterns and trip making characteristics of the area.

Travel to and around Elgin

Elgin is the main settlement in Moray, with the A96 (T) Aberdeen - Inverness passing east-west through the settlement, and the A941 travelling north-south. Elgin has been the main focus for housing and employment development over the past 20 years, with two major housing allocations (one to the north and one to the south) and a major employment allocation to the east (with direct access from the A96 (T)). A transport strategy for Elgin was developed in 2017 which included the collation and analysis of travel data from a number of sources including volumetric multimodal surveys, census data and public responses to a travel survey ([Elgin Transport Strategy Main Technical Report](#)).

To inform the strategy, the accessibility in Elgin was determined for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and private vehicles (cars) based on estimated journey times. TRACC multimodal accessibility analysis software was used to determine these journey times with a single destination on Elgin High Street selected for reliable comparison. Section 2.2 of the ETS Main Technical Report describes the full methodology for the accessibility assessment and present the results for pedestrian, cycle, public transport and car accessibility ([Elgin Transport Strategy](#)).

The assessment found that Elgin is a very walkable town due to its compact nature and lack of significant hills, with all existing areas able to access the town centre within a 35-minute walk. For cycling the periphery of Elgin can access the town centre within a 15-minute cycle time and key commuter areas such as Lossiemouth are within a 30 – 40-minute cycle time of the town centre. Public transport accessibility within Elgin was relatively good with 15-minute journeys to the town centre. The accessibility within Elgin and other main settlements in Moray will be reviewed as part of the Transport Appraisal.

The results of the 2011 Scotland Census provide the overall mode share for journeys to work and study for those who both live and work or study in Elgin. Analysis of this data found that:

- Car is the most dominant of all transport modes, attributing to 41% of the mode share;
- Walking is the second most popular mode of travel, accounting for nearly 27% of journeys;
- Car sharing contributes to 11% of the mode share;

- Almost 9% of Elgin’s population work or study from home;
- Public Transport (bus and train combined) accounts for almost 7% of the mode share; and
- 3% of people from Elgin cycle to work or study.

Active Travel (walking and cycling) accounts for 30% of the total mode share for journeys to work or study within Elgin.

How people travel into, around and out of Elgin is paramount to identifying the demands for travel on routes throughout the settlement. The ETS utilised ward level Origin-Destination data from the 2011 Scotland Census as a basis for understanding where people travelling to and from, in and around Elgin. Section 2.4 of the [ETS Main Technical Report](#) contains the analysis of this data which found that 60% of Elgin’s population travel to a work destination in Elgin with 40% travelling elsewhere. For people travelling to Elgin to work, Lossiemouth was the biggest contributor of movements to Elgin from within Moray, followed by Forres, Buckie and Keith.

The ETS also considered traffic trends within Elgin and on the A96 trunk road through Elgin by comparing observed traffic flows from 2010 to 2015. Section 2.5 of the [ETS Main Technical Report](#) presents the observations which generally found that average daily traffic on select local road links increased by approximately 5% between 2010 and 2015. Traffic increased by around 2% on the A96 (T) through Elgin over the same period, with slightly reduced growth of 1.5% on the A96 (T) within the town centre (Alexandra Road).

Traffic data from between 2015 and 2019 traffic on the A96 (T) within Elgin continued to grow by approximately 1.7% on the A96 (T) West Road. However, there was a decrease of 3.8% on the A96 (T) East Road. On the local roads within Elgin traffic over the period 2015 to 2018 has no discernible pattern of overall growth. Traffic has grown on roads serving new development areas and on an alternative route for traffic entering Elgin from the east. In 2018 comprehensive surveys were undertaken within Elgin, including junction turning counts, to inform the development of the new Elgin Traffic Model. These surveys have been repeated in 2023 and are being used to inform the update of the Elgin Traffic Model.

In 2020 and 2021 there were significant reductions in traffic flows as a result of travel restrictions in place during the Covid-19 Global Pandemic. As restrictions eased, traffic levels increased. However, many travellers, in particular commuters, have changed their trip making characteristics which means that for a number of locations in Elgin traffic flows have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels.

Annual Average Daily Traffic Moray Permanent Counter Sites - Urban Roads									
Site Number	Classification	Site Details	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Percentage increase from 2018
8	Urban	A941 - New Elgin Rd on railway bridge	20584	21648	16847	19471	21822	21013	2%
10	Urban	A941 - Hay St, Elgin	10894 ¹	13075	10107	11204	12841	12122	11%
20	Urban	A941 - Main St, New Elgin	11302	11791	9585	10531	11468	12048	7%
11	Urban	A941 - North St, Elgin	15977	15289	13147	13228	15039	15174	-5%
22	Urban	B9012 - Spynie Rd, Elgin	4137	4405	3331	3491	3689	3790	-8%
9	Urban	U171e - Edgar Road, Elgin	10340	10319	8876	10044	9757	9124	-12%
18	Urban	U171e - Maisondue Rd, Elgin	8344	8889	6838	7787	6808	5643	-32%
19	Urban	U171e - Reiket Lane, Elgin	10318	10283	8857	8678	1218	9727	-6%
21	Urban	U171e - Newmill Rd, Elgin	11995	11798	9554	10381	10483	10698	-11%
32	Urban	U171e - Wittet Drive, Elgin	4590	4486	3877	3953	3190	4076	-11%
33	Urban	U171e - Covesea Rd, Elgin	3496	3487	3411	3740	4138	4169	19% ²
36	Urban	C40E Thornhill Rd Shops	4871	4724	3568	3912	4061	4170	-14%
37	Urban	U171e - The Wards, Elgin	7254	7582	6165	6374	1798	7131	-2%
14	Urban	A940 - St Catherines Road, Forres	11004	11391	9158	10025	10818	10773	-2%

1. Traffic flows in 2018 affected by long term roadworks near this count site.
2. Increase in traffic due construction of new housing with new access near this count site.

Inter-Urban Travel by Motorised Vehicles

Whilst traffic flows with Elgin and Forres (single site) have generally remained below pre-pandemic levels, traffic flows on the main inter-urban local roads have generally returned to pre-pandemic levels and are starting to show signs of growth beyond 2018/2019 flows.

Annual Average Daily Traffic Moray Permanent Counter Sites – Inter-Urban Roads									
Site Number	Classification	Site Details	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Percentage increase from 2018
5	Inter Urban	A941 - Elgin - Lossiemouth	10069	10194	8857	9694	10160	10335	3%
7	Inter Urban	A941 - Elgin - Fogwatt	7127	6914	5764	6205	6188	6708	-6%
15	Inter Urban	B9016 - Aultmore	2230	2079	1688	1914	2073	2281	2%

23	Inter Urban	A98 - Arradoul	9835	9886	8298	7699	9719	10172	3%
26	Inter Urban	A98 - Portsoy Rd, Cullen	4672	4496	3977	4438	4511	4790	3%
29	Inter Urban	B9013 - Newton to Burghead Rd at Roseisle	2995	3075	2552	2815	2835	2845	-5%
35	Inter Urban	A95 - Keith (NESCAMP site)	3130	3146	2647	2835	2963	3294	5%

Data from Transport Scotland's permanent count sites on the Trunk Road network also generally shows that traffic flows are return to pre-pandemic levels on inter-urban roads. Whereas on the sections of road within built-up areas the traffic flows generally remains below pre-pandemic levels.

Average Daily Traffic _ Transport Scotland Sites Moray							
Site Details	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Percentage increase from 2018
A96 Mosstodloch Bypass East	12845	9385	7399	9140	12567	13102	2%
A96 Mosstodloch Bypass Middle	17559	17412	14015	15419	16836	17520	0%
A96 Mosstodloch Bypass West	14648	14502	9965	12937	13631	14260	-3%
A96 Elgin to Lhanbryde	17785	17740	14068	16214	17127	17706	0%
A96 Elgin - East Road	22601	22019	16376	18691	21323	22038	-2%
A96 Elgin - West Road	16814	16361	12145	14852	15231	15786	-6%
A96 Forres to Elgin	12394	12371	9509	10953	11931	12301	-1%
A96 Forres	12755	13090	10323	10501	13613	13943	9%
A96 Forres (aka Brodie)(Core 744	11187	11674	8984	10126	11274	11636	4%
A95 Ballindalloch (Core 905)	2398	2431	1679	1914	2294	2430	1%

The Transport Appraisal will include further analysis of data and take into consideration the existing traffic flows, seeking to ensure that where possible new development does not have an adverse impact on those locations where capacity is constrained, and if required, mitigation is provided through the provision of infrastructure or developer obligations.

Road Safety

The draft [Moray Road Safety Plan to 2030](#) is currently out to stakeholder consultation. Data analysis undertaken to inform the plan shows that the overall number of reported injury accidents in Moray is low (compared to the rest of Scotland), 70% of casualties are injured on non-built up roads (rural roads) compared to just a third of casualties for Scotland as a whole. Consideration of the reported injury accidents will be included as part of the Transport Appraisal and be taken into account in the site selection process.

A96 (T) Aberdeen – Inverness Corridor

The A96 (T) Aberdeen – Inverness is the key corridor for east-west travel through and within Moray. The route currently passes through a number of settlements, including the larger settlements of Elgin and Keith, and skirts the northern side of Forres (acting as a barrier between the town of Forres and its railway station and main employment areas). In 2011 Scottish Government stated that their aim to provide a dual carriageway with

grade-separated junctions between Aberdeen and Inverness by the year 2030. The preferred route of the section which starts in Hardmuir and ends at Fochabers has been safeguarded in the 2020 Moray LDP.

However in 2021, as part of the [Bute House Agreement](#), Scottish Government commenced a review of the A96 corridor. [The Case for Change](#) was published in December 2022 and highlighted the following options which would be taken forward to the next stage which have direct implications for the Moray LDP:

Mode of Transport	Option	Description
Active Travel	Active Communities	Deliver networks of high-quality active travel routes and placemaking improvements within key communities along the A96 corridor such as Kintore, Inverurie, Huntly, Fochabers, Elgin and Forres.
Active Travel	Active Connections	Deliver high quality active travel linkages for people walking, wheeling and cycling between settlements along the A96 corridor, which would combine to form a continuous traffic-free path all the way from Inverness to Aberdeen, either directly adjacent to, or close to, the A96.
Bus	Bus Priority Measures and Park & Ride	Implement schemes targeted at delivering faster and more reliable journey times for bus passengers, coupled with the provision of new bus Park & Ride sites where appropriate.
Freight	Introduce Rail Freight Terminals	Facilitate the introduction, the development and operation of rail freight terminals by the private sector at Inverness, Georgemas Junction, Keith and Elgin, to facilitate freight movements to / from these locations by rail.
Multimodal	Improved Public Transport Passenger Interchange Facilities	Improve public transport passenger facilities, including accessibility and quality enhancements at bus stations and railway stations.
Multimodal	Active Hubs	The creation of a strategy for the delivery of active hubs within communities across the length of the A96 corridor.
Public Transport	Investment in Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Mobility as a Service (MaaS)	Improve access to travel opportunities in locations with low bus network connectivity or where conventional fixed route services may not be suitable or viable. In these areas, flexible services, such as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) or Community Transport (CT), may be able to provide improved public transport links.
Rail	Linespeed, Passenger and Freight Capacity Improvements on Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Line	Three distinct improvements to the railway between Aberdeen and Inverness; linespeed improvements to cut journey times, the provision of passing loops to enable a more frequent passenger service and the provision of freight facilities to enable intermodal freight to operate.

Rail	Improved Parking Provision at Railway Stations	Enhance parking facilities at railway stations between Aberdeen and Inverness with the aim of encouraging the use of existing low carbon infrastructure for medium and long-distance travel along the corridor.
Road	Targeted Road Safety Improvements	Improving the safety performance of the A96 trunk road to address both real and perceived road safety concerns (with potential measures ranging from minor improvements through to partial dualling).
Road	Elgin Bypass	Improve the safety, resilience, and reliability of the A96 within the vicinity of Elgin through the provision of a bypass of the town.
Road	Keith Bypass	Improve the safety, resilience, and reliability of the A96 within the vicinity of Keith through the provision of a bypass of the town.
Road	Forres Bypass	Improve the safety, resilience, and reliability of the A96 in Forres through the provision of a bypass within the vicinity of the town.
Technology	A96 Electric Corridor	Provision of alternative refuelling infrastructure and facilities along the A96 corridor, its interfacing local roads as well as, where appropriate, strategic economic and transport hubs. This option will directly facilitate the dispensation of alternative sources of fuel for various modes of sustainable transport although it is recognised that the option is likely to focus on road vehicles.

Reference: [Table 11: List of Retained Options A96 Corridor Review – Initial Appraisal: Case for Change \(December 2022\)](#)

As the A96 corridor review is on-going, once it has been published the findings which have direct implications for Moray will be discussed with Transport Scotland and included in the Transport Appraisal. Moray Council is also committed to sharing any data collected which may be of use to the A96 Review and to providing access to the Elgin Traffic Model to support Transport Scotland’s next steps.

There are currently unknown outcomes of the A96 Corridor Review which may have implications on the consideration and selection of development sites. This introduces a risk to the timetable of the LDP review as some information may not be available on the options to be taken forward for the A96 corridor at the time of that the site selection process takes place.

Infrastructure Condition

Another area where there are unknown implications at this time relates to the bridges and culverts on the local road network which cross watercourses, rivers and railways. The condition of these bridges is regularly assessed. However over the past 15 years there has been a decline in funding for the replacement and repair of these structures. The Council has developed a methodology to prioritise the replacement and/or repair of critical bridges. This methodology will inform a strategy which will be developed to ensure that resources are directed to maintaining the critical bridges. The strategy will also identify bridges which will not receive funding

(as there are reasonable alternative routes). The bridges strategy will be used to inform the site selection process.

Engagement and Consultation

Public drop in exhibitions as part of early engagement on the new Local Development Plan were held across 8 towns from March 2023 to September 2023 with over 300 people attending. Comments relating to transport and active travel were as follows:

- Concerns expressed regarding the cost of public transport and the need to invest in improved bus and train services across the region.
- The lack of public transport in rural areas and along the coast and reliability of service was a major concern. The opportunity for M-Connect to supplement existing bus services was identified with more investment to extend the service.
- Investment in new active travel routes to create connections within towns, connecting main towns to smaller surrounding villages and upgrading of existing networks was also highlighted as an issue.
- The need to repair Cloddach and Pittendreich bridges was identified.

A number of comments on transport and active travel were also submitted through the Call for Ideas:

- Tackle congestion on A96/ Dual A96/Bypass for Elgin and Keith
- Better transport links needed to attract business.
- More/better active travel links across Moray and filling missing links.
- Improved bus services – increase number of services and provide evening services
- Reduce speeds in town to 20mph.
- Carpool/car share
- Rail connection to Duftown

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

- Local Authority Transportation colleagues – Transportation colleagues were integral to drafting the summary of evidence and their comments on the finalised schedule and review of stakeholder responses have been incorporated.
- Transport Scotland – See statement of agreement/dispute below.
- HiTRANS – See statement of agreement below.
- NESTRANS – See Statement of agreement below.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

The Council is committed to preparing a Transport Appraisal to inform the LDP with traffic counts completed and budget allocated to complete this. The Council will work with Transport Scotland in the preparation of the Transport Appraisal to identify new or updated data as identified in the 'Links to Evidence' section above.

- The findings of the A96 Corridor Review will have implications on the LDP. The Council is committed to working with Transport Scotland to incorporate the findings of the review into the Transport Appraisal and to ensure that development proposed within the LDP supports the delivery of any transport interventions which are taken forward. When available, the outcomes of the A96 Corridor Review will be used to inform the Transport Appraisal and LDP (including site selection).
- To ensure development is directed to locations with access to the most sustainable modes of transport site selection assessments will include consideration of
 - Public transport availability;
 - Active Travel infrastructure;
 - EV charging infrastructure;

- Road safety – reported injury accidents;
- Bridges Strategy; and
- Any capacity constraints on the Trunk Road and Public Road networks.
- As options identified in the A96 Corridor Review Case for Change (Dec 2022) relating to rail investment/improvement are developed, they will be considered in the review of the LDP e.g. safeguard of land for options.
- Continue developer requirement to provide EV charging facilities for residents/visitors/employees.
- As projects develop from the Moray Hydrogen Strategy, they will be considered in the LDP e.g. identification/safeguard of land for refuelling stations.

Statements of Agreement

NESTRANS

NESTRANS welcomed the recognition and inclusion of various aspects within the evidence base these include the key transport links between Moray and Aberdeenshire, the improvements proposed to railway lines, evidence from the updated case for change for the A96, sustainable transport goals, aspirations for road safety and discussion on alternative fuel vehicle opportunities.

HITRANS

HITRANS have noted their agreement with the sufficiency of the evidence set out.

Transport Scotland

Transport Scotland recommend that the Council access Rail Data Marketplace and liaise with Network Rail or Scotrail Holdings to obtain any further data. Moray Council confirm that this will be done for the Transport Appraisal. For the Evidence Report Moray Council have considered data from Scottish Transport Statistics which provided a high-level overview of rail passenger journeys from Moray stations.

Transport Scotland noted a lack of information within the Evidence Report on parking and the need to minimise space dedicated to parking and shift to low/no car developments. As part of the review of the last LDP Moray Council reviewed the parking standards and included them as an appendix to the LDP policy document. A review of the standards to reflect the approach set out in NPF4 will be completed and form part of the Proposed Plan. Transport Scotland have referenced the Climatexchange document “Reducing Car use through parking policies” and information from this will be used to inform the Moray Council approach to parking standards. It should be noted that since 2012 Moray Council have had reduced parking standards for town centre developments including zero parking provision where there is change of use or conversion of commercial buildings to residential dwellings.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	11. Flood Risk and Water Management
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 15(5) – the principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district Regulation 9 having regard to any river basin management plan, flood risk management plan and any local flood risk management plan.
	<p>CD145 Moray Local Development Plan 2020 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment</p> <p>CD146 Local Flood Risk Management Plan for Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside 2022</p> <p>CD147 Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the North East</p> <p>CD148 Moray Council Surface Water Management Plans</p> <p>CD149 The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021 - 2027 Dec 2021</p> <p>CD150 Moray Council Supplementary Guidance on Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment for New Development Aug 2020</p>
NPF4 Context	
<p>NPF 4 Policy 22 Flood risk and water management sets out a policy framework that seeks to increase community resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change, by avoiding development in areas at flood risk. The Moray Local Development Plan 2027 should take into account the probability of flooding from all sources and make use of relevant flood risk and river basin management plans for the area to inform land use designations using a precautionary approach. Policy 20 Blue and Green Networks highlights the integral role of green and blue infrastructure in flood prevention and water management while Policy 10 Coastal development requires a precautionary approach to flood risk in coastal areas recognising rising sea levels and more extreme weather events resulting from climate change. It should be noted that green and blue infrastructure is addressed in Schedule 2b Blue and Green Spaces and coastal development is addressed in schedule 1 Climate Change.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Flooding In Moray</p> <p>Floods in July 1997, November 2002 and September 2009 caused widespread damage to homes and businesses, and disruption to road and rail links. Since 2014 Moray Council has invested over £170 million in Flood Alleviation Schemes across Moray. These schemes/works include flood alleviation schemes in Elgin, Forres (Burn of Mosset), Forres (River Findhorn), Rothes, Lhanbryde and Newmill and flood alleviation works in Dallas, Longmorn and Arradoul.</p> <p>Moray Council’s approach to flood risk</p> <p>The Council’s current approach to flood risk is closely aligned with the policy intentions set out in NPF 4. The following sections sets out the flood risk plans and assessments the Council has in place in respect of flood risk to influence the Moray Local Development Plan 2027.</p> <p>Local Flood Risk Management Plans – Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside and the North East</p> <p>The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 places a duty on responsible authorities to manage flood risk on a plan-led, risk based, sustainable way. The 2015 National Flood Risk Strategy for Scotland splits Moray across two local district areas, the Findhorn, Nairn and Speyside (FNS) Local Plan</p>	

District Area and the North East Local Plan District Area. Moray Council is the lead local authority for the FNS plan and is part of the North East Local Plan District, for which Aberdeenshire is the lead local authority. Every six years Moray Council must produce and publish a Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the FNS Local Plan District. This Plan is developed working in partnership with SEPA, Scottish Water, Highland Council, Cairngorm National Park Authority, Forestry Scotland and Transport Scotland. The most up to date plan was adopted in 2022 and a summary of actions within it are set out below.

Principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district

Most of Moray sits within the FNS Local Plan District that covers an area of around 4,800km² and has a population of approximately 100,000 people. It includes the low-lying coastal areas around Nairn (outwith Moray) and Lossiemouth in the north and the steeper, more rugged landscape of the Cairngorms National Park in the south. The area is largely rural with the main land cover including heather grassland, bog, coniferous woodland and agricultural land. The main rivers are the River Spey, the River Findhorn and the River Nairn. The coastline is approximately 70km long and includes rocky shorelines and extensive beaches.

There is river, surface water and coastal flood risk in the FNS Local Plan District, with the main risk coming from river and surface water flooding. The area has been affected by several large floods. In December 2012, a storm led to coastal flooding in Lossiemouth and Kingston and in August 2014 ex-hurricane Bertha caused widespread river flooding within Elgin and Dallas was also particularly affected. Currently it is estimated that there are 11,000 people and 7,300 homes and businesses at risk from flooding. This is estimated to increase to 15,000 people and 9,900 homes and businesses by the 2080s due to climate change.

The Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the North East covers the eastern extents of Moray where land use is typically arable, horticultural farmland and improved grasslands. There is river, surface water and coastal flood risk in the Local Plan District, with the main risk coming from river and surface water flooding.

There are eight areas within Moray identified as being potentially vulnerable in the FNS Local Flood Risk Management Plan these are Burghead to Lossiemouth, Spynie, Lhanbryde, Kingston and Garmouth, Elgin, Forres, Rothes, Aberlour and Kinloss. The North East Local Flood Risk Management Plan identifies potentially vulnerable areas in Portgordon, Buckie, Keith and Newmill. Both Local Flood Risk Management Plans adopted in 2022 identify priority actions within the six-year cycle 2022 to 2028 including maintenance of existing flood defences, flood studies, surface water management plans, flood schemes or work design. Further detail includes funding arrangements for each action, which organisation will be responsible for delivery of the action, the timescale for delivery and details of any coordination between authorities.

Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment for New Developments Supplementary Guidance August 2020

The Council has produced detailed Flooding and Drainage Impact Assessment Supplementary Guidance providing advice to developers on the information required to support planning applications. The guidance requires flood risk and drainage to be assessed at an early stage in the development process by a competent and experienced professional. The level of detail required is proportionate to the complexity of the flood risk mechanisms, the site and the severity of the risk, which is affected by its location and to an extent the vulnerability of the proposed development. It is expected the information submitted will demonstrate that the proposed development is not at risk of flooding and will not increase flood risk elsewhere. Any proposal must also include robust and sustainable drainage proposals.

The Council is in the process of updating this Supplementary Guidance to take account of NPF 4 Policy 22 Flood Risk and Water Management Planning which will effectively ensure guidance is fully reflective of the requirements from NPF 4. This will be adopted shortly.

Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) 2020 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was prepared to support land designations identified within the Moray Local Development Plan 2020. The high-level map-based assessment provided an overview of the scope and nature of all sources of existing and future flood risk within the local development plan area. The plan was based on SEPA's Flood Risk Hazard Maps, recorded Moray Council information available at the time and technical comments from the Moray Council's Flood Risk Management Team and SEPA. The review of existing known information was used to screen existing designations, LONG sites and preferred bid sites submitted for inclusion in the Moray Local Development Plan 2020.

A revised SFRA will be prepared taking account of updated guidance, information and mapping.

Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP)

Surface water flooding is experienced throughout Moray. The Council has worked in partnership with SEPA and Scottish Water to develop Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP). By 2027 the objective is to reduce the number of properties at risk from surface water flooding, reduce the annual average damage caused by surface water flooding and maximise the number of people registered with Floodline. Priority areas have been identified and SWMP are being developed for Aberlour, Rothes, Buckie, Elgin, Keith and Forres. In terms of progress actions from the Elgin SWMP have been forwarded for national prioritisation by Scottish Government and subject to resources and funding will be progressed. The Forres SWMP has been delayed this year due to resourcing issues.

River Basin Management Plans

SEPA has prepared a River Basin Management Plan for Scotland for 2021 to 2027 which sets out a framework for protecting and improving the benefits provided by the water environment. The Council has not prepared its own River Basin Management Plan but is seeking to mitigate the impact on the water environment and help halt species decline by seeking to deliver high quality, multifunctional blue-green spaces in new developments and promoting natural solutions such as rain gardens to deal with surface water. The Council is commissioning ecologists to identify a network of blue and green networks across Moray which includes enhancement and protection of blue and green infrastructure. Relationships are being developed with the Spey Catchment Initiative and the Findhorn Watershed Initiative to look at how nature networks can be delivered. Early draft mapping has identified the river catchments as being crucial for ecological connectivity. It is anticipated that the final nature network opportunity map will highlight key recommended actions that will guide a wide range of stakeholders. The Council also works with the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative to support their strategic approach to invasive non-native species (INNS) removal along watercourses across Moray.

Conclusion

The Council's approach to flood risk management is already closely aligned to NPF 4 and the Flood Risk Management Act 2009. The current Flooding and Drainage Supplementary Guidance is being updated to reflect NPF 4 Policy 22 and will be adopted shortly. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared to support the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 will be updated to take account of new land designations and any changes in legislation and guidance. The assessment will be informed by work already undertaken on Local Flood Risk Management Plans, Surface Water Management Plans and with input from SEPA and the Council's Flood Risk Management Team.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

- SEPA – See statement of agreement below.
- Scottish Water – See statement of agreement below.
- Moray Council Flood Risk Management- comments have been incorporated into the schedule.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- **Updated Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessment for New Developments Supplementary Guidance is currently being prepared to align current guidance with NPF 4 Policy 22 Flood risk and water management.**

Statements of Agreement

SEPA

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

SEPA has recently published new guidance on SFRA to align with NPF4 and the new development planning process and SEPA's flood maps have been updated (Nov 2023) for the coast and now include the Future Flood Maps. The SFRA prepared for the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 does not use the most up to date information required to inform the Evidence Report. In addition to this the Council's flood team has recently commissioned studies of flood protection schemes to assess the risk behind them, which could also be reflected in an updated SFRA.

To address this agreement has been reached with SEPA that the Council will prepare a SFRA to be agreed with SEPA in advance of submitting the Evidence Report to the DPEA. The SFRA will be prepared with input from the Council's Flood Risk Management Team and in consultation with SEPA.

Site Assessment Checklist

Request that the site appraisal methodology includes questions/criteria related to flood risk. Specifically, for every site that at the time of its assessment either (i) its flood risk is fully understood (which could be via the SFRA) or (ii), if not, that a Flood Risk Assessment be undertaken at the appropriate stage to ensure that it is. This will provide certainty at as early a stage as possible in the plan preparation that only sites that are in accordance with NPF4 are included in the Proposed Plan.

The Council is using the site assessment checklist promoted by the Improvement Service which includes the two-flood risk related questions set out above.

Scottish Water

Scottish Water is satisfied with the sufficiency of the evidence provided.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	12. Community Wealth Building
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 15(5)- the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district.
Links to Evidence	<p>CD151 Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy 2023 Draft CD152 Moray Planning Policy Guidance - NPF4 Policy 25 CD153 Moray Council Register of Community Asset Transfers CD154 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation dataset CD120 Moray Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plan v2 CD155 Inequalities in Moray lived experience of poverty 2019-2021. CD156 Buckie Central East Locality Plan 2019-2029 CD157 New Elgin East Community Plan 2019 CD158 Developing a new model to maximise local economic benefits from development in Moray and Highland January 2024</p>
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF) Context	
<p>NPF4 requires local development plans to be aligned with any strategy for community wealth building for the area. Spatial strategies should address community wealth building priorities, identify community assets, set out opportunities to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality and seek to provide benefits for local communities.</p> <p>The policy outcomes which NPF aspires to for CWB are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local economic development that focuses on community and place benefits as a central and primary consideration, to support local employment and supply chains. Support community ownership and management of buildings and land. 	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Community Wealth Building Strategy</p> <p>Moray Council’s Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee approved a draft Community Wealth Building Strategy on 20th June 2023 which identified the following key challenges and opportunities (page 7);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare- Moray has inadequate provision of pre-school and wraparound childcare facilities. Gender pay gap of 22.1%, higher than the Scottish average of 11.1% Female entrepreneurship rate is 8.6%, one of the highest rates in Scotland. Moray has a thriving third sector with 147 organisations (voluntary and community organisations- including registered charities, associations, self- help and community groups) Average weekly earnings are the 5th lowest in Scotland and is 6% lower than the Scottish average. Underemployment rate is 9.3% exceeding the Scottish average of 8.5%. The Moray Growth Deal, Just Transition, Levelling Up Fund, Long Term Plan for Towns and significant investment at RAF Lossiemouth and through the private sector all offer significant opportunities to embed and deliver community wealth building principles. By 2039 the working age population in Scotland is projected to increase by 1% but in Moray it is projected to fall by 3% 	

The vision in the draft strategy is “creating a fair and equal society where our communities have a greater stake in Moray’s economy”. The priorities in the draft Strategy are reflected in the aims which are;

- Embed a local first approach to procurement within Moray where more wealth is retained locally, benefitting our local workforce, and reducing our carbon footprint.
- Through investing in our current and future workforce, we want to remove barriers to employment by providing learning and skills development opportunities, increase access to create pathways and ensure our workforce are paid a fair wage.
- Support small businesses, community organisations, social enterprises, and co-operatives to have a greater stake in the economy, with increased ownership and control of assets, to retain and circulate wealth within our communities.
- We will work with key departments within Moray Council and our anchor partners to ensure communities maximise benefit and generate wealth from local land and property.
- Capitalise on opportunities for public and community investment in local development proposals.

The Moray Anchor Network has been set up to share information and deliver projects identified in the Strategy. A final version of the Strategy is anticipated to be considered by the Council’s Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee in spring/ summer 2024.

Community Wealth Building Planning Policy Guidance

To support delivery of NPF4 policy 25 Community Wealth Building, the Council approved planning policy guidance on 30th May 2023 which sets out information which applicants should set out in a Community Wealth Building Plan for planning applications of;

- Residential developments of 10 or more units
- Commercial, industrial, retail, leisure, infrastructure developments where floor space is 1,000m² or more.
- Energy related proposals of 5MW or more (including battery storage, grid infrastructure and energy production).

The guidance aims (p2) to;

- Increase employment opportunities by helping local businesses to grow and diversify.
- Increase local spend within the local area through increased use of the local supply chain.
- Provide local employment and skills development opportunities within the local area, particularly within areas of highest inequalities.
- To provide opportunities for new business start-ups in the area
- To provide opportunities for community ownership of business and assets

The Council’s planning staff encourage applicants/ developers to engage as early as possible to discuss community wealth building opportunities, however, while respecting that this area of national policy is relatively new and with the exception of some excellent examples of community wealth building from local housebuilders and other industry, the quality of Community Wealth Building Plans submitted to date have failed to address the policy requirements.

Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) v2

The Moray Community Planning Partnership agreed version 2 of the LOIP in 2023. The Partnership has identified 4 main priority areas to guide this work and deliver the vision (p4) of;

- Developing a diverse, inclusive and sustainable economy
- Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray

- Empowering and connecting communities
- Improving wellbeing of our population

Inequalities in Moray 2019- lived experience of poverty 2019-2021.

This report originated from an action group which was developed from the Fairer Moray Forum to address a disconnection between grassroots activity and work ongoing at a strategic level. A key feature of the findings is understanding the barriers to participation and learning and acknowledging that basic security needs have to be met before people are able to engage, participate and learn, it was considered essential to understand the challenges better to gain insights into meeting the learning needs of people with increased barriers.

The report sets out a series of case studies and summaries to highlight the lived experience of Moray residents. The report is currently being updated.

Locality Plans for New Elgin East and Buckie Central

The New Elgin East Community Plan was approved in September 2019 and refreshed in 2023 by the New Elgin East Working Group with support from the Moray Community Planning Partnership. The Plan identifies strengths of New Elgin and a number of areas for improvement which are grouped into 4 themes of;

- Better Off
- Better Place
- Better Health
- Better Community

The Buckie Central East Locality Plan 2019-2029 was published in August 2019 and then reviewed and published in 2022 by the Moray Community Planning Partnership supported by Buckie Area Forum and Buckie and District Community Council. Four priority areas for action are identified;

- Community Voice
- Connectivity
- Learning and Life Skills
- Young People

Community Asset Transfers

The Council Asset Register for Community Asset Transfers accords with section 94 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 which requires that public authorities make available a register of land and buildings that it owns or leases to the best of its knowledge and belief. The inclusion of an asset on the register of a requirement of the Act and does not necessarily imply that Moray Council is actively seeking to transfer that asset to the community. The register identifies if assets are occupied by the Council, leased out or transferred.

In addition to the register, a report on current cases 2023/24 is included as evidence, which sets out expressions of interest, asset transfer requests, CAT-lite applications, Community Rent rebate applications and closed cases.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

SIMD is a “relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones)”. If an area is identified as deprived this can relate to people having low incomes but can also mean fewer resources of opportunities, SIMD looks at the extent to which an area is deprived relating to 7 factors, namely income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. SIMD ranks data zones from the most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976). It is acknowledged that data zones in rural areas cover a large geographic extent and reflect a more mixed picture of deprivation.

Specific data zone areas of higher deprivation highlighted in the SIMD for Moray ranked below 1500 include;

- Heldon West (S01011092) - 560
- Elgin Cathedral to Ashgrove (S0101101)- 1067
- New Elgin East (S01101111)- 1298
- Forres Central East (S1101154)- 1377

Developing a new model to maximise local economic benefits from development in Moray and Highland January 2024

Moray and Highland Council commissioned Biggar Economics to investigate the benefits which have arisen during the construction and operation of energy developments in Moray and Highland and to consider how benefits might be maximised in the future.

The study highlighted that since 1998, an estimated £4.5 billion has been spent on the development and construction of wind energy projects in the region while ongoing operations and maintenance expenditure is estimated to amount to around £128 million/year. The social and economic impacts of this investment are huge, it is estimated that;

- The capital expenditure undertaken to develop these sites has generated a cumulative economic impact of £0.9 billion and supported around 17,670 years of employment in Moray and Highland: and
- Each year the ongoing operations of these wind farms generates a further £34 million GVA for the regio and supports more than 400 jobs.

The sector is also an important source of support for local communities. In 2023 between 80% to 90% of wind farms in the region were providing direct funding to host communities through a community benefit fund. In addition, many developers are also providing wider benefits through mechanisms such as shared ownership and electricity discount schemes or support for community led housing projects or recreational infrastructure. The total value of community benefit funding generated for the region in 2023 was estimated to amount to around £8.7 million.

The report highlights the potential to significantly increase this impact if the Scottish Government is to achieve its ambition of 20GW installed energy capacity by 2030. This could result in generate almost £22 million/annum in community benefit funding. This could increase significantly higher is strategic interventions are applied and good practice is adopted to ensure a consistent approach is applied.

The average value of planned community benefit funds is expected to increase to around £4,888/MW over the next few years, close to the Government recommendation of £5,000. However, while there is some evidence that the impacts of onshore renewable energy projects are being maximised, within the constraints oof the current system, the analysis suggests there is considerable scope to improve how the system operates, which could further increase the scale of benefits moving forward.

The study recommends this could be achieved by adopting a new progressive approach to delivering socio-economic and community benefits that builds on existing strengths of the system. The study identifies the following opportunities to increase impact;

- Local skills plan- could be produced by communities within their community action plans/ local place plans to enable developed to consider how they could support this (e.g. by including direct funding for local apprenticeships)
- Supply chain facilitators- local skills providers and economic development agencies could support small businesses to address challenges around bureaucracy, to promote supply chain opportunities and support formation of supply chain co-operatives.
- Regional skills action plan- Councils and UHI could create a regional skills action plan to ensure the local population has access to sector specific skills training.

Other actions identified in the study to maximise the future impact of community benefit packages relate steps that could be taken to enable broader based collaboration in project development and delivery and facilitate more strategic/ transformational projects by;

- Providing location specific support for developing local place plans
- Encouraging new community benefit funds to include provision for core funding for a development officer role to support project development.
- Encouraging new community benefit funds to allocate a proportion of funds for the joint use of groups of community councils to increase community capacity and better align strategic and local priorities.
- Encourage early engagement and agreement of a memorandum of understanding between developers and communities before planning applications are lodged.
- Remove restrictions to enable public bodies and local businesses to bid for project funding.
- Enable trusted third sector organisations to deliver specialist/ larger projects.

A new model for community benefit should build on good practice which has provided funding for community ownership of infrastructure, recreational use of tracks, seed funding towards community led housing projects, discounted electricity or energy efficiency measures, health and fitness club memberships, funding for training and development.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

The following were sent a copy of the schedule, and their responses are summarised below.

- Moray Council Community Wealth Building Officer
- Head of Strengthening Communities, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Business Gateway Manager
- TSI Moray
- Moray Council Communities Service Manager

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- To consider detailed policy approach to support national policy in delivering the Moray Community Wealth Building Strategy
- To consider policy approach to support NPF4 Policy 9 Energy and the requirements to maximise socio-economic benefits from developments.
- To consider how a strategic approach to delivering regional socio-economic inequalities can be delivered through the planning process.
- To consider how to highlight community asset transfer opportunities and link to Local Place Plans
- To highlight areas of greatest inequalities from SIMD and ensure that Community Wealth Building Plans submitted with development proposals target support towards these communities.
- To consider policy approach to link and support delivering the actions in the core documents referenced in this schedule with a focus on addressing barriers to participation, poverty and skills development.
- To embed Locality Plans into the LDP and reference in policies and delivery plan as appropriate.

Statements of Agreement

Statement of agreement received from Moray Council Community Support Unit Manager. Suggested adding a definition of third sector organisation, which has been added on page 2.

Statements of agreement also received from Business gateway and the Moray Council Community Wealth Building officer.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	13. Productive Places – Business and Industry
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended, section 15(5)(a) ‘the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district’. Section 15 (5)(b) the principal purposes for which land is used.
Links to Evidence	CD159 Moray Employment Land Audit 2023 CD160 Moray Business Property Needs Study 2023 CD161 Moray Economic Strategy 2022 CD162 Moray Growth Deal Full Deal Document CD028 Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report 2023 CD026 Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2024 CD033 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – 2023 CD063 Moray Hydrogen Strategy 2022
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context	
The spatial principles within NPF4 seek to support delivery of productive places that have a greener, fairer, and more inclusive wellbeing economy. The intent of Policy 26 Business and Industry is to encourage, promote and facilitate business and industry uses and enable alternative ways of working. NPF4 states LDPs should allocate sufficient land for business and industry, taking into account business and industry land audits, in particular ensuring that there is a suitable range of sites that meet current market demand, location, size and quality in terms of accessibility and services. This allocation should take account of local economic strategies and support broader objectives of delivering a low carbon and net zero economic recovery, and a fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.	
Summary of Evidence	
Business and Industry – Context	
The manufacturing sector employs more than one in ten of all employees in Moray (15.4% of employment). The largest proportion of this employment is in the manufacture of food and beverages which is a well-established sector with a number of large businesses with a long association with the region including whisky distilleries, Baxter’s and Walkers. Manufacture of wood products also makes up a significant portion of manufacturing jobs and it is noted James Jones sawmill has invested in expansion. Moray also has relatively a large proportion of employment within health (15.4%), retail (11.5%), and construction (7.7%). With RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks both located within Moray there is a significant proportion of employment within defence activities. The region’s strength in defence activities has enabled the development of an aerospace sector in Moray as transferrable skills are utilised. An example of this is the commercial rocket developer Orbex at Forres Enterprise Park. Office-based sectors (associated with class 4 land use), including professional, scientific, and technical, ICT financial and insurance and business administration and support services, account for over 3,000 jobs in Moray, 7.9% of total employment. This is around half the level across Scotland as a whole (14.7%).	
Moray Business Property Needs Study 2023	
To inform the Moray Local Development Plan 2027 (MLDP 2027) a Business Property Needs study was commissioned to provide up to date information and analysis of current and future demand for business property in Moray. A key aim of the study is to ensure the supply of employment land within the new LDP reflects current and future business needs.	

The study includes the context of the economic baseline, details of economic policy and its context, details of key sectors that are expected to be key drivers of growth, a property market review which considers trends, supply, rents and viability, an assessment of the Council's own industrial portfolio, and an assessment of land allocated in the 2020 LDP which have all informed the market needs identified within the Study. Market needs were also informed by consultation via a survey of business property occupiers. In addition to the business survey engagement in the form of a workshop was held with Moray Businesses Resilience Forum with representatives from Moray Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Moray Chamber of Commerce, Moray Business Women, Elgin BID, Visit Moray Speyside, Business Gateway, Skills Development Scotland, Federation of Small Businesses, Scottish Council for Development and Industry and Department of Work and Pensions. Consultations were also undertaken with local developers, HIE, the Scottish Whisky Association and Chivas Brothers.

The study noted the demand in Moray was generally focused on smaller units for small local businesses however there is also need for larger sites for inward investment and scale-up. Expansion within the whisky distilling industry has also seen demand for land for bonded warehousing.

Strategies and projects (including the Moray Economic Strategy and Moray Growth Deal) aim to create work opportunities in Moray that will support well paid work and retain the workforce. Demand is anticipated from existing businesses looking to expand with future demand also anticipated from key sectors and inward investors. The study identified the following key market needs.

Sector	Requirements	Location
Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	Majority of demand for land and property across Moray. Demand primarily for small to medium standard industrial units and serviced sites for bespoke requirements. Small modern office premises in service centres.	Demand across Moray, with Elgin accounting for 60% of market and tiered focus on employment centres below that.
Energy and Renewables	Substantial growth anticipated. Sites ranging from battery storage to operation and maintenance hubs or production facilities which may include requirements for lay down space and port access.	Likely to be concentrated around Buckie due to its role in operations and maintenance.
Manufacture of food and beverages	Largest sector of manufacturing but potential for contraction in terms of jobs due to automation. Significant development pipeline for whisky storage/bonded warehouses.	Concentrated in Speyside which may require additional sites for storage or maturation.
Manufacture of wood products	Moray has above average and increasing job numbers within sector. Land hungry and possibly site specific.	Most significant demand likely Elgin, Forres and Mosstodloch.
Sustainable Tourism	Number of businesses now exceeding pre-pandemic level and could lead to demand for class 4 space, but more likely within class 7 and 11.	Potential demand around Elgin
Life Sciences	Has attracted recent investment but starting from low base so growth anticipated in the longer term. Growth Deal includes proposals for the Moray Rural Centre of Excellence for Digital Health and Care Innovation.	Forres but "living lab" test beds across Moray.
Defence Activities	Additional expected investment will increase direct and indirect employment.	Around RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks.

Aerospace	Strengths in defence sector likely to enable development of aerospace sector alongside projects like MAATIC. Requirements include premises for manufacturing and engineering and testing facilities. Large sites required.	Around Forres and wider supply chain.
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Moray’s employment land demand is demonstrated in enquiries, take-up, and development. The study notes that employment land take up in Moray outperforms comparable regions (including Perth and Kinross, East Lothian, and South Ayrshire) and has increased recently as occupier modernisation and growth take effect. Moray also has existing land hungry industries. To accommodate these trends the study recommends a rate 5-6 hectares of employment land per annum. This estimated annual requirement is split across market areas on the following basis.

Elgin	Forres	Buckie	Keith	Speyside
3.2ha	0.9ha	0.9ha	0.5	0.5

Effective Employment Land Supply 2023				
Market Area	Marketable/Effective (Net figure in hectares)	Number of Sites	Estimated Annual Requirements	Available Supply in years
Elgin	57.61	10	3.2	18 years
Forres	13.02	1	0.9	14 years
Buckie	22.34	4	0.9	24 years
Keith	5.3	4	0.5	10 years
Speyside	1.6	2	0.5	3 years

There have been no applications for new industrial estates since adoption of MLDP2020 despite some of these containing a mix of uses to try to aid viability and support initial site servicing. Interest and development on the Elgin Business Park at Barmuckity has been strong with most sites in the first phase now either developed, in progress or under offer. This raises the issue of “where next” for Elgin.

The Business Property Needs Study noted that given average industrial and office rents across Moray and current construction costs it would be challenging to build viable new industrial or office premises. Across the UK higher interest rates have reduced property values while at the same time costs have risen, this has suppressed developer activity. It is assumed in time this will alleviate and new development by the private sector is again positive and viable in Elgin. However, the study notes that intervention will still be required to open up and service sites in Elgin and to support development of premises in lower tier settlements and specialist properties. Where intervention is required, the Council will work with other partners on a case-by-case basis to explore opportunities.

Employment Land Audit 2023

The 2023 Employment Land Audit sets out the effective land supply i.e. the supply that has a secure planning status (designated or planning consent), can be serviced within 5 years and is accessible. These figures reflect classes 4 business, 5 general industrial and 6 storage or distribution.

The Business Property Needs Study highlights that the majority of demand is likely to be for class 5 and 6. Therefore, using the estimated annual requirements highlights the need to identify additional general industrial land in all areas if a 15-year supply is identified on adoption of the plan in 2027.

Effective Employment Land Supply 2023 - Split General Industrial and High Amenity					
Market Area	General Industrial	Number of sites	Supply in years	High Amenity	Number of sites
Elgin Market Area	41.06	9	12 years	16.55	3
Elgin	27.16	7		16.55	3
Mosstodloch	12.8	1			
Troves	1.1	1			
Forres	2.75	1	3 years	10.27	1
Buckie Market Area	15.32	2	17 years	7.02	2
Buckie	15.32	2		6.37	1
Cullen				0.65	1
Keith	3.55	3	7 years	1.75	1
Speyside Market Area	0.6	1	1 year	1	1
Aberlour				1	1
Roths	0.6	1			

Moray Economic Strategy 2022

Moray Community Planning Partnership updated the Moray Economic Strategy in 2022 taking into consideration the impacts on Moray from the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit, and the cost-of-living crisis. The overall vision is for Moray to be *“A distinctive and attractive place to live, work, operate a business or social enterprise, study, and visit.”* Five priority areas for action are identified as:

- Moray Growth Deal projects
- A sufficient labour market.
- Ensuring alignment between skills provision and the changing economy
- Integrated approach to delivering transition to net zero and community wealth building and
- Supporting productivity growth.

To support productivity growth the strategy highlights the need to increase the number of start-ups, as well as the number of scale ups to help them become larger local employers. To enable this Moray will require suitable employment land to support small and medium size businesses.

The aim to deliver on transition to net zero highlights the opportunities within the renewable energy sector with expected growth in onshore wind, offshore wind, and hydrogen. As these sectors grow, they will create demand for land.

Moray Growth Deal

The Moray Growth Deal builds on the existing strengths of Moray’s culture, tourism and manufacturing sectors, plus development of other sectors. It aims to address challenges to facilitate economic growth that is sustainable, fair and inclusive. The deal will see Investment of over £100 million across eight strategic projects:

- Moray Aerospace, Advanced Technology and Innovation campus (MAATIC).
- Manufacturing Innovation Centre for Moray (MICM)
- Business Enterprise Hub
- Digital Health
- Cultural Quarter
- Housing Mix Delivery
- Early Years STEM
- Bus Revolution

MAATIC, MICM, the Business Enterprise Hub and Digital Health projects will require commercial/industrial space and as the sectors associated with the project develop this is likely to increase demand for employment land.

Monitoring Report - Pressure for other Uses on Industrial Estates

A review of data in 2023 for the Monitoring Report from the Council's Address Gazetteer has allowed a high-level analysis of non-industrial/business uses (i.e. not use class 4 business, use class 5 general industrial, or class 6 storage or distribution) on industrial estates to identify what types of non-industrial/business uses are present on industrial estates and where the proportion of these uses is greatest.

- This highlights that there is pressure for restaurants/cafes, showrooms, and leisure activities including gyms.
- The majority of sites identified in LDP2020 as Industrial Estates have predominantly employment uses (i.e. over 85% of addresses identified within the Gazetteer were for employment uses within class 4, 5 and 6).
- The exceptions to this are I4 Tyock, I5 Pinefield, I6 Linkwood East in Elgin and I4 Shore Street Lossiemouth where a greater proportion of addresses were for non-employment uses. Within I4 Shore Street there is a high proportion of residential addresses.

Where there are greater numbers of "other uses" this can change the character of the industrial estate and undermine the intended use. This could result in making it more difficult for heavier industrial uses to locate to these industrial estates and mean new employment land is taken up more rapidly.

There is also increasing pressure for battery storage which has impacted on industrial sites. This has been particularly prevalent in Keith but with more recent interest on industrial sites within other towns including Elgin. Battery storage is classed as a generating station and therefore does not fall within the use classes normally associated with industrial estates (i.e. use class 4 business, use class 5 general industrial, and class 6 storage or distribution). The level of employment tends to be low relative to the scale of this type of development. Battery storage can use up significant areas of industrial sites and has the potential to result in the LDP being unable to meet demand for uses within use class 4, 5 and 6 that potentially employ more people and are more suited to designated industrial estates.

Rural Development – Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report 2023

There are specific challenges and pressures that Moray faces around rural business development. These range from small local businesses to the large-scale expansion and storage requirements of the whisky industry. There is also significant pressure from the energy sector including battery storage, anaerobic digesters, and development to support the National Grid. The issue is covered in more detail within schedule 16 that covers Rural Development.

Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy

The Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy identifies that forestry is a mature sector of the economy generating more than £39 million per year and providing direct employment for almost 1,000 people.

The sector includes primary forestry and timber extraction, processing of timber and manufacture of woodland based products, services provided to support forestry and tourism related activity. Moray accounts of around 6% of all forestry and logging related employment across Scotland, making the sector five times more concentrated than the Scottish average. The region plays an important role in underpinning the wider UK forestry and associated timber construction sectors. It is home to a well-established arboriculture sector that incorporates some of the UK's largest tree nurseries as well as some thriving and innovative timber engineering operations which make an important contribution to the construction sector.

Enhancing the economic potential of woodlands is a key objective of the strategy with the following aims to

- Increase forestry related skills and education and boost employment in the sector.
- Encouraging the increased use of local timber in processing and construction.
- Grow the number of sustainable timber processing and manufacturing businesses in Moray.

Delivery actions include:

- Increasing local opportunities for accessing forestry related training
- Creation of a local construction forum to increase awareness of locally grown timber products.
- Develop a campaign to promote use of quality locally grown timber in construction.
- Support the expansion of Moray's forestry cover.

Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework

The Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework was approved by the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 19th December 2023. The framework was developed in response to increasing development pressures in the immediate vicinity of Keith and Blackhillock. This included pressure on designated employment sites for battery storage. The framework seeks to guide development proposals for grid infrastructure and energy systems/storage associated with the most appropriate locations. A landscape sensitivity assessment was used to identify development sites for a range of uses along with landscape mitigation.

Public Engagement

Public drop in exhibitions were held across 8 towns with over 300 people attending. Comments relating to employment and the economy were on the following themes.

- The need to create more full-time jobs was identified with the prevalence of part time posts seen as contributing to the gender pay gap.
- Investing in broadband and co-working spaces to encourage remote workers to the area.
- A green energy hub for Speyside was suggested to promote innovative solutions and help exciting job to encourage young people to stay.

A number of comments were also submitted through the Call for Ideas on supporting the economy.

- Moray should be a leading demonstration council area in Scotland (and in Europe) in terms of climate resilient, flourishing new (green) economy, demonstrating the empowerment and resilience of entrepreneurial, socially inclusive, community-led, net zero, ecologically regenerative development and innovation.
- Success of Elgin Business Park noted and comment that enough new employment needs to be identified. Elgin Business Park was seen to have attracted business over vacant brownfield sites.
- Develop a circular economy.
- More resources and grants for small businesses.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

- Highlands and Islands Enterprise – see statement of agreement below.
- Moray Chamber of Commerce – no response received.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

Additional Employment Land Requirements

The employment land requirement is calculated to allow a 15-year supply from adoption of the plan. This provides a generous supply and ensures a continuing and flexible supply towards the end of the 10-year plan period. Taking into account the recommended annual supply within the Business Property Needs Study, the key market needs identified in the study and the Marketable/Effective supply within the 2023 Employment Land Audit the additional employment land requirements are identified for each market areas as follows.

Minimum Additional Requirements per Market Area

- **Elgin Market Area** – identify minimum of 22.4 ha of general industrial land, with a focus on land within Elgin itself. The Elgin Market Area, and specifically Elgin itself, is likely to be the focus of demand. This will include demand across all sectors and specifically SMEs looking for small and medium sized industrial units and serviced industrial space.
- **Forres Market Area** – identify minimum of 14.4ha of general industrial land. Given the potential demand from the aerospace sector for larger sites consideration will also need to be given to the identification of additional land that can accommodate higher amenity uses.
- **Buckie Market Area** – identify minimum of 1.8ha of general industrial land. The existing LONG allocation could be brought forward to meet this requirement; however, consideration should also be given to additional sites that would meet the needs of the potential demand from the energy and renewables sector.
- **Keith Market Area** – identify minimum of 6ha of general industrial land. The existing LONG could be brought forward to meet some of this requirement however additional sites will also be required. Given the significant constraints around Keith consideration may require to be given to sites out with the settlement or identification of search areas.
- **Speyside Market Area** – identify minimum of 9ha of general industrial land. Historically it has been challenging to identify land within this market area. A new approach that identifies broad areas of search around key settlements with specific design criteria could be considered.
- **Inward Investment Sites** – Sites with potential for large scale inward investment (circa 40ha) to be identified.

Site Delivery

As identified in the Business Property Needs Study development viability due to low rents/low land value and high construction costs hampers delivery of sites. The new Local Development Plan could consider identifying land for employment uses alongside housing expansion with requirements for developers to service land as part of a comprehensive solution to delivery of a neighbourhood that supports local living. As such the servicing of employment sites would be enabled by housing development on other parts of the development area reducing the need for intervention. Servicing of employment land as part of wider housing/neighbourhood development would be identified as a requirement on a site-by-site basis and would require to be subject to a legal agreement associated with the wider development site.

Other options that require to be considered to support delivery of site infrastructure and opening up industrial sites are identification of potential partners and funding sources. Consideration of the use of compulsory purchase powers may also be required where landowners are unwilling to sell or are holding out for higher land values. Where intervention is required, the Council will work with other partners on a case-by-case basis to explore opportunities.

Other Uses on Industrial Estates

NPF4 policy 26-part c allows “other employment uses” to be supported where they do not prejudice the primary function of the area and are compatible with the business/industrial character of the area. Current LDP policy has similar criteria but also requires consideration to be given to the current supply of serviced employment land. It also restricts retail uses to those ancillaries to the principal use (i.e. manufacture, wholesale). The difference in current policy position and NPF4 combined with the pressure on industrial estates set out above could justify a more tailored local policy that provides clearer and more stringent criteria in respect of other uses. This could include requiring a sequential approach to “other uses” so that applicants are required to demonstrate that other sites are not suitable or available. In order to pro-actively plan for uses like battery storage and anaerobic digestion consideration will be given to the identification of sites could also reduce the pressure on industrial estates.

Statements of Agreement

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) consider that reference should be made to the

- Enterprise Park, Forres (including the Masterplan and Design Guide)
- Buckie Harbour Masterplan
- Moray Hydrogen Strategy

HIE note that the Enterprise Park, Forres is becoming a major manufacturing base for vertical launch and note the Moray Hydrogen Strategy could be quite transformative along the A95 and A96 with potential pilot sites in Aberlour and Elgin.

Moray Council note that the Enterprise Park Forres and the potential associated with aerospace sector is discussed within the Moray Business Needs Study. It is noted that the Enterprise Park Forres Masterplan/Design Guide is an ongoing piece of work and to date has not been agreed for publication/consultation. As this work progresses it will inform the new LDP. The needs of the renewables sector associated with Buckie harbour supporting the operations and maintenance of offshore windfarms are also identified within the Moray Business Needs Study. It is noted that feasibility work around the Buckie Harbour Masterplan is ongoing and once suitable options for usage and capacity are determined the draft Masterplan document developed in August 2023 will be updated. The ongoing work on the Buckie Harbour Masterplan will inform the new LDP. The Moray Hydrogen Strategy is highlighted within Schedules 5 Energy and 10b Transportation. To ensure a proportionate approach within the Evidence Report Moray Council did not include these within this schedule. Moray Council do not object to inclusion of the Moray Hydrogen Strategy being included within the schedule and have added this to the Links to Evidence.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	14. Town Centres and Retail
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended, section 15(5)(a) ‘the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district; and the principal purposes for which the land is used.
Links to Evidence	<p>CD163 Moray Retail Study 2021</p> <p>CD164 Moray Town Centre Health Check 2023 including Moray Town Centre Perception Study 2023</p> <p>CD089 Aberlour Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD090 Buckie Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD091 Dufftown Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD092 Forres Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD093 Keith Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD094 Lossiemouth Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022</p> <p>CD088 Elgin City Centre Masterplan 2021</p> <p>CD162 Moray Growth Deal – Full Deal Document</p> <p>CD001 Moray Local Development Plan 2020</p>
National Planning Framework 4 Context	
<p>NPF4 policy 27 City, town, local and commercial centres seek to encourage, promote and facilitate development in our city and town centres by applying the Town Centre First approach to help centres adapt positively to long-term economic, environmental and societal changes and by encouraging town centre living.</p> <p>NPF4 states LDPs should support sustainable futures for city, town, and local centres, in particular opportunities to enhance city and town centres. Where appropriate they should support proposals for improving the sustainability of existing commercial centres where appropriate. LDPs should identify a network of centres that reflect the principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods and the town centre vision. LDPs should be informed by evidence on where clustering of non-retail uses may be adversely impacting on the wellbeing of communities. They should also consider, and if appropriate, identify any areas where drive-through facilities may be acceptable where they would not negatively impact on the principles of local living or sustainable travel.</p> <p>Policy 28 Retail of NPF4 looks to encourage, promote, and facilitate retail investment in the most sustainable locations that are most accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes. NPF4 states LDPs should consider where there may be a need for further retail provision, this may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where a retail study identifies deficiencies in retail provision in terms of quality and quantity in an area; or • when allocating sites for housing or the creation of new communities, in terms of the need for neighbourhood shopping, and supporting local living. <p>LDPs should identify areas where proposals for healthy food and drink outlets can be supported.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres</p> <p>Moray Context</p>	

Town Centre Health Checks have been completed biennially since 2010. The exception is 2020 when covid restriction meant it was not possible to complete this with the audit being completed in 2021 as part of the Moray Retail Study. This includes monitoring of the diversity of uses across town centres and vacancies. Past health checks have also monitored footfall although this was not possible for the 2023 health check due the unreliability and vandalism of the counters.

As identified in the Moray Retail Study 2021 Elgin City Centre is the most important location for both retail and services with Moray accounting for 28% of the retail floorspace and 31% of the turnover. However, whilst the total retail and services floor area at Edgar Road Commercial Centre is half that of the town centre the retail turnover is only slightly less than the City Centre. Buckie town centre is the largest both in terms of retail floorspace and turnover when compared to Forres and Keith town centres. Provision is also distributed between smaller towns with Lossiemouth, Aberlour, Dufftown and Fochabers having distinct “High Streets”. Within Elgin and Forres there are a number of small neighbourhood centres that have been designed to meet the day to day needs of residents.

Town Centre Perception Survey

A town centre perception survey in December 2023 was completed with 646 returns. This covered the main town centres of Elgin, Buckie, Forres, Keith, Lossiemouth, Aberlour and Dufftown. People were asked to rate ten aspects of the town centre by giving a score out of five. The survey found that public transport was rated best in Keith but worst in Elgin. None attained a good score for daytime events or evening economy. Accessibility was rated fair or good for all towns. Only Aberlour scored good for the retail offering although it is noted this was a low response rate. For all seven towns, the main reason for visiting was for shopping. As expected for Elgin being the main centre of employment, the next main reason for visiting Elgin was for work. Shopping was identified as needing improvement in all town centres. Cleanliness came out second as most in need of improvement everywhere, particularly in Elgin. Car parking (particularly in Elgin) and restaurants (in Buckie) came third as requiring improvement.

The Council is developing a new Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Elgin Town Centre to ensure the benefits of significant investment through the Levelling Up Fund and Long-Term Plan for Towns are evaluated.

Town Centre Health Check – Diversity of Use and Vacancies

The 2023 Town Centre Health Checks demonstrate that Moray’s main town centres continue to support a wide range of retail, service and leisure uses. The national trends identified within the Moray Retail Study of a reduction in national multiple retailers, particularly in comparison retailing, can also be seen when looking at the space in use data. This is particularly evident at the St Giles Centre within Elgin City Centre where a number of national retailers including New Look, Semi Chem and Monsoon have left. This has led to a very high vacancy rate within the centre which has been highlighted in the Town Centre Health Check since 2018. Consideration to the future uses of the St Giles Centre is required.

The Town Centre Health Check includes identification of vacant former convenience, comparison, retail service or leisure service units. The 2023 results set out below show that since monitoring began in 2010 Elgin, Buckie and Forres have recorded the highest number of vacant units with Lossiemouth and Keith bucking this trend. The smaller towns of Dufftown, Fochabers, and Rothes have also recorded the highest number of vacant units however it is noted this is 1 or 2 units more than previous Health Checks.

Town Centre	Number of Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate %	Comparison to previous health checks
ELGIN	40	16%	Highest number of units recorded vacant – previous highest was 39 units in 2014

BUCKIE	11	1%	Highest number of units recorded vacant and equal to numbers recorded in 2014
FORRES	18	16.2%	Highest number of units recorded vacant – previous highest was 12 recorded in 2021
LOSSIEMOUTH	5	9%	Highest recorded was 8 units in 2014 and 2016
KEITH	7	8.5%	Highest recorded was 12 units in 2021 by Keith Hargest Ltd for the Moray Retail Study.
ABERLOUR	0		Highest recorded is 1 in 2012 and 2018.
DUFFTOWN	5	11.6%	Highest number of units recorded vacant – previous highest was 4 in 2012 and 2016
FOCHABERS	3	11.5%	Highest number of units recorded vacant – previous highest was 1 in 2012 to 2018.
ROTHES	5	21.1%	Highest number of units recorded vacant – previous highest was 3 in 2012, 2014 and 2018.

It is noted that a number of Church of Scotland churches are closing with congregations merging and using fewer buildings. A number of church buildings affected are within town centres – these include St Giles Church at the very centre of Elgin High Street and Elgin High Church of South Street which closed at the end of 2023. The impact of large prominent buildings being vacant has the potential to impact on the appearance and perception of the town centres.

Clustering of Non-Retail Uses

The 2023 Town Centre Health Check does not identify any issues of clustering of betting offices or high interest money lenders within town centres. Within Buckie and Elgin, a single betting shop was identified in each town centre with none identified in Forres, Keith or Lossiemouth. The only unit resembling a high interest money lender is Ramsdens in Elgin who offer pawnbroking loans. The scale of these uses is not considered to be adversely impacting communities at present but will continue to be monitored through biennial Town Centre Health Checks.

Takeaways make up the following proportion of retail units within town centres. These make up less than 10% of each town centre with the exception of Lossiemouth. This perhaps reflects the concentration of tourism facilities in Lossiemouth and also the extensive town centre boundary due to the concentration of uses on Clifton Road and along Queen Street. In the majority of town centres while some takeaway units are located close to each other this is not to the extent that distinct clusters have formed with only two units at most in immediate proximity. All the takeaways identified in Lossiemouth town centre were on Queen Street these are spread relatively evenly across the length of a relatively long street such that at present there are no distinct clusters. The western end of Forres High Street 129-149 High Street has three takeaways in close proximity but not immediately neighbouring where additional takeaways could result in a cluster forming. Given the level of vacant units across all the town centres if a number of these were to be occupied by takeaways there is the potential for this to result in clusters forming that would be detrimental to the character and amenity of centres.

It is noted the analysis does not include restaurants and cafes which offer takeaway services in addition to the “sit in” offer.

Location	Number of Units	% of comparison, convenience, retail service and leisure service units
Elgin City Centre	16	6.5%
Buckie Town Centre	7	8.7%
Forres Town Centre	7	6.3%
Keith Town Centre	5	6%
Lossiemouth Town Centre	7	12%

Town Centre Health Checks do not cover smaller local or neighbourhood centres. It is observed that there are individual takeaways outwith town centres with some of these located with other shops/commercial units or sitting on their own. As these are largely individual units' clusters have not formed, however, local knowledge identifies that the shopping parade on Springfield Road/Glenmoray Drive has a high proportion of takeaways with three of the six units being takeaways with the other units made up of a pub, newsagents, and small convenience store (Morrison's Daily). The proximity to Elgin High School raises a concern about availability of fast or convenience foods and the impacts this has on healthy diets.

Drive Throughs

Drive throughs within Moray are concentrated along the A96 to the east of Elgin. These have developed incrementally along a 2.5km stretch of the A96. Furthest east is a Starbucks at Elgin Business Park at Barmuckity that is associated with a garage, at the Linkwood East Industrial estate close to the edge of Elgin is a KFC and Costa with consent for a Subway also at this location, McDonalds sits slightly further into Elgin on the Linkwood Industrial estate, whilst not a drive through at the entrance to the Morycroft industrial estate is a Harry Gow takeaway in a former petrol station, and then closer to the centre of Elgin there is Burger King at Ashgrove. These are all visible from the A96 and will cater for people travelling along the route. However, observed behaviour suggest that significant amount of the customer base is local. Given these are generally located within industrial or business areas or require access to be taken over the busy A96 from housing areas they do not contribute positively to the principles of local living.

Network of Centres

The Moray Retail Study 2021 included a review of the network of centres in section 4.9 onwards. This included reviewing the number of retail units and turnover of significant retail centres. This analysis identified 24 retail locations across Moray that could be classed into five groups. The smallest of these other locations were considered to have very limited retail/service offer and turnover levels that were not sufficient enough to justify identification as a village or local centre. The study also identified more local and village centre which the study recommends are added to the network of centres already identified within MLDP2020. This would mean local centres including Cullen, Findhorn, Hopeman, and Lhanbryde as well as the local centres within Elgin (Bishopmill and Southfield Drive/Thornhill) and Regent Street in Keith being identified as part of the network of centres.

The Moray Retail Study recommends the network of centres below.

Category of Centre	Function/Role of Centre	Locations
City/Regional Centre	Principal retail location for Moray. Provides wide range of retail, retail service and non-retail public and commercial services and facilities.	Elgin City Centre

	Provides a focus for the Elgin and Moray wide community and as a focus for transport.	
Town Centres	Provide a wide range of retail, retail service, and non-retail public and commercial services and facilities. Provide a focus for the local community (town and immediate rural hinterland) and for local transport networks.	Buckie Forres Keith Lossiemouth
Local and Village Centres	Provide a limited range of retail facilities and other services/facilities – primarily meeting some of the day to day needs of the local community	<u>Elgin Local Centres</u> Bishopmill Thornhill/Southfield Drive <u>Keith Local Centres</u> Regent Street <u>Village Centres</u> Aberlour Cullen Dufftown Findhorn Fochabers Hopeman Lhanbryde Rothes
Commercial Centre	Retail development (either purpose built or well-defined groups of separate units) that serve one or more specific retail market sectors with relative wide catchment areas	Edgar Road (comprising the Elgin and Springfield Retail Parks and adjoining areas)

It is noted that there are other small concentrations of shops that were not identified within the Retail Study that may merit being identified as Local Centres due to their observed function within the neighbourhood. These include the small shopping parade on Springfield Road/Glenmoray Drive in Elgin, the shops at Newmill Road in Elgin, the shops and services at Ferrylea in Forres and the shop units focused around the garage in Mosstodloch. These shops serve and would have been designed to serve the daily needs of the surrounding neighbourhood.

Core Retail Areas

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development and Use Classes) (Scotland) Miscellaneous Amendment Order 2023 has provided greater flexibility to the use of certain buildings within centres to support the resilience, regeneration and recovery of centres. This gives a lot more flexibility to businesses to change between retail, business, financial / professional services, food and drink and other high street uses without requiring planning consent. These changes were already largely supported by policies within the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 in defined Town Centres and Core Retail Areas (CRA), albeit consent was required. However, this did not extend to Use Class 4 Business and permitted development rights would support a change from retail uses to class 4 Business which would allow offices, research and development and light industrial up to 300 sqm.

Town Centre Improvement Plans and Town Centre Taskforce

The Council has approved plans to support town centre regeneration in the form of Town Centre Improvement Plans (TCIPs) for Forres, Buckie, Lossiemouth, Keith, Aberlour and Dufftown. These Plans reflect the key themes emphasised in NPF4 including town centre regeneration, re-use of vacant and derelict properties, reducing carbon, promoting biodiversity and active travel. The Council has secured external funding from a number of sources to support delivery of the TCIPs. This includes funding from the Scottish Government Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) and UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Using some of this funding the Moray Town Centre Capital Grant Scheme was launched in November 2023 with 43 applications received by the 8th January 2024 application deadline. The grants of up to 50% of eligible costs aim to support existing and new businesses, encourage the redevelopment and reuse of vacant properties to support town centre living and improve the attractiveness of the town centres.

Following a Town Centre Summit organised by the Chamber of Commerce and Moray Council a Moray Town Centre Taskforce has been established bringing together a range of stakeholders to support the regeneration projects set out within the TCIPs as well as any other projects that emerge from consultation with communities and stakeholders.

Elgin City Centre Masterplan

Elgin City Centre Masterplan was prepared as a partnership between Elgin BID, Elgin Community Council and Moray Council informed through engagement and consultation with the public. The masterplan was approved in November 2021. The masterplan has a vision to transform Elgin City Centre into a successful, well connected, healthy, green, attractive, inclusive and carbon conscious centre offering a variety of attractions where people of all ages and abilities shop, live, relax and do business. Projects within the masterplan are grouped under four headings with a range of projects proposed in each.

- **Core Retail Area** - The range of projects aim to transform the centre of Elgin into a vibrant place that supports economic activity and encourages people to live, work and use the centre during the day and evening. Projects are focused on redeveloping or bringing empty properties back into use for both business and residential use, addressing blank facades onto the A96, improving the attractiveness of streets including South Street and Batchen Lane/Thunderton Place, supporting active and sustainable travel, and taking a consistent, fresh approach to signage, street furniture, public art, lighting and planting.
- **Cultural Quarter** - The Cultural Quarter has six key elements which are collectively intended to develop a creative arts centre, develop an evening economy in Elgin City Centre, attract and support tourists and encourage them to stay longer and improve connections between the High Street and Lossie Green/ Cooper Park. The six elements are Elgin Town Hall, Grant Lodge, new hotel, Elgin Museum, Cooper Park and an art gallery.
- **Cooper Park** -The Masterplan aims to refresh Cooper Park and re-connect it to the High Street by creating an exciting and attractive cultural and heritage offer for the community and visitors, catering for all its users, young children, teenagers, families, and those with disabilities.
- **Other Projects** – These projects include enhancement of gateways and roundabouts, redevelopment of former sawmill and auction mart, public toilets, and gull control.

As noted above successive Town Centre Health Checks have identified high and increasing vacancies within the St Giles Centre. The centre has been up for auction twice. The masterplan identifies the St Giles Centre as a project and consideration needs to be given to new/diversified uses of the centre which occupies a significant city centre footprint.

In November 2023 Moray was provisionally awarded £18.3 million Levelling Up funding (LUF) in the fund's third round. The Council is currently going through the validation process with the UK Government. LUF funding will help to deliver key projects within the Elgin City Centre Masterplan. The LUF bid includes redevelopment of vacant and derelict buildings on South Street and the former Jailhouse nightclub for commercial, retail and residential. Other projects include a creative arts centre, traffic control measures, active travel enhancements (Lossie Wynd, Commerce Street, Moss Street and railway bridge), transformation of Cooper Park Pond, extension and redevelopment of Cooper Park toilets to café and a natural flood management scheme at the former sawmill and Elgin auction mart.

Elgin is one of seven towns in Scotland to receive £20 million funding from the UK Government Long-Term Plan for Towns. The Long-Term Plan requires a Town Board to be established to draw up a long-term Town Plan to invest in and regenerate Elgin with this based on the priorities of local people. The Town Plan is to be subject to consultation with local people. The £20 million is an endowment style fund to support the long-term Town Plan over 10 years. A Town Board is in the process of being established to bring together community leaders, local employers, the Council and the local MP. The Town Plan will then be developed and should be in place by the 1st of August.

It is proposed that work to review the Elgin City Centre Masterplan will begin in 2024.

Moray Growth Deal

The Moray Growth Deal will see significant investment across eight projects. This includes the Cultural Quarter project that will see Elgin Town Hall redeveloped and Grant Lodge brought back into use with the elements of the project linked together by enhanced public spaces and connections to ensure easy and safe walking and cycling to the town centre. The Business Enterprise Hub is to be developed in the centre of Elgin. The Housing Mix project is also looking at refurbishment of properties in or on the edge of town centres to provide affordable and private housing to support town centre regeneration, encourage more economic activity in town centres and support development of an evening economy.

Public Engagement

Public drop in exhibitions as part of early engagement on the new Local Development Plan were held across 8 towns from March 2023 to September 2023 with over 300 people attending. Comments relating to town centres were on the following themes.

- The need to create to support the nighttime economy and culture to increase footfall and vibrancy in Moray's town centres was viewed as important.
- In Elgin comments included addressing parking, traffic control to allow outdoor dining, connections over the A96, relocation of businesses from the St Giles and finding an alternative use for the building, improving and tidying up the appearance of buildings and centre, and toilet provision were identified.
- In Forres comments included re-opening the Falconer Museum, toilet provision and demand for theatre, cinema, art and exhibition space.
- In Buckie improving lighting at Cluny Square was highlighted.
- In Keith reopening toilets, providing water stands and EV charging were highlighted.

A number of comments were also submitted through the Call for Ideas on supporting the town centres.

- Suggestions for pop up shops and to make the St Giles centre in Elgin a gallery.
- Later shop opening and pedestrianisation of town centres.

Retail

Moray Retail Study 2021 - Further Retail Provision

The Moray Retail Study 2021 updated the Strategic Retail Model and compared existing and future expenditure and notional average sales for existing and committed floorspace to provide an indicative quantitative basis for assessing the general level of retail deficiencies and identify where there is capacity for increased retail floorspace.

At a Moray level there are no quantitative or qualitative retail deficiencies for convenience goods (i.e. food, newsagents etc). Speyside, Lossiemouth and Fochabers have a quantitative deficiency but are within the catchment area of superstores in Elgin. In Aberlour, Dufftown, Fochabers, and Rothes there is a qualitative deficiency in terms of lack of small supermarket/large convenience-format store in the region of 600-1,000 sqm compared to the existing smaller formats. If this qualitative deficiency requires to be addressed requires to be considered. It is noted that the study considers the greatest potential would be for existing operators developing stores in place of existing stores.

At both a Moray level and for individual towns there is a significant retail deficiency for comparison goods (clothing, footwear, furniture, electrical good etc). However, market demand and national trends are unlikely to support the scale of deficiency identified and the study considers there to be a low likelihood of any significant change to comparison retail space provision in most towns. In fact, within Elgin current national trends would suggest multiple national retailers are more likely to reduce space occupied. There is limited requirement for additional floor space in Buckie, Forres and Keith however if there is demand this is likely to be for bulky goods given the lack of local provision.

Moray Retail Study 2021 - Neighbourhood Retail

The Moray Retail Study included a review of five masterplans to assess retail and commercial floorspace requirements for the new neighbourhoods and taking into account local living concepts. The study considered experience from other major residential development in Scotland, along with deficiencies in the areas proposed, turnover potential based on market share of expenditure generated by new housing and broader evidence of market demand for retail/commercial space. information from the Strategic Retail Model on the level of retail space particularly convenience.

The principal findings were that;

- For retail and service units trade can be generated from: the proposed new housing; existing residential areas within 10-minute walking distance (i.e. in accordance with 20-minute neighbourhood principle, and potentially wider than this); and pass-by trade.
- For modern convenience-format stores approximately 900 dwellings are required for the store to have sufficient trade to be viable. Smaller stores can be supported with lower numbers of new housing depending on the range of goods retailed.
- For other commercial uses (retail and community services – Classes 2, 3 and others), the diversity of potential occupiers makes it more difficult to generalise. However, for uses such as health and beauty, café and hot food takeaway most trade will be generated from within the new development as walk-in trade.
- For these other commercial unit(s) flexibility is required to maximise the attractiveness of the units to potential occupiers. This should include any of Class 1, Class 2, Class 3, hot-food takeaway, and other community-based businesses (e.g. dentists, clinics, vet etc). These units could be occupied at an earlier stage but will, in all likelihood, be dependent on custom generated by the new residential development. On this basis the study considers it appropriate that these units should only be available after approximately 150 residential units are built and occupied.
- There is very wide variation in the total quantity of space that can be provided for retail and commercial services in developments.

- Provision of commercial units too early will result in units remaining vacant for a number of years which will reduce the attractiveness of the development and could, potentially, result in the deterioration of units thereby undermining the potential to find occupiers.

The recommendations for the masterplan areas/new neighbourhoods included the following:

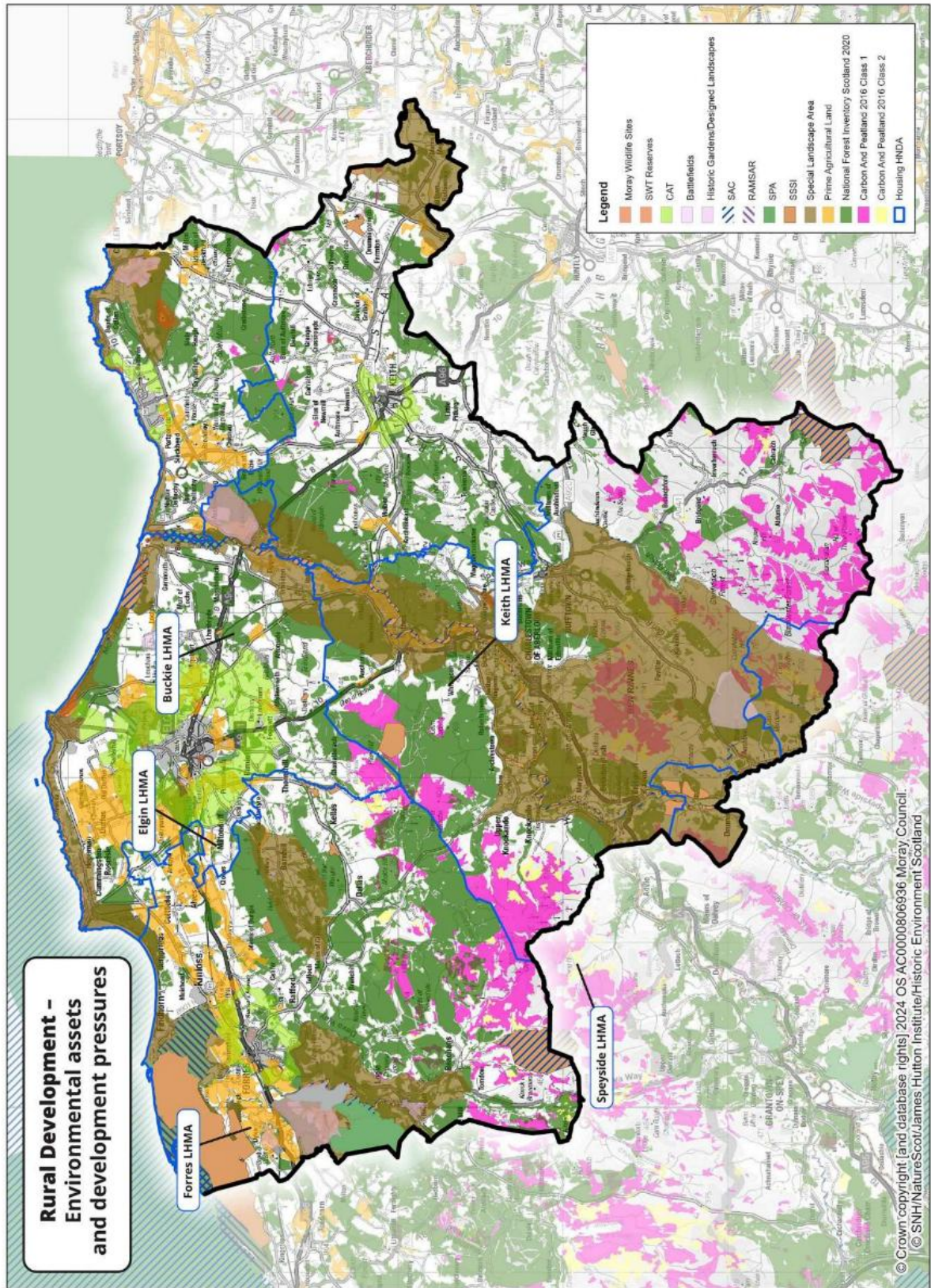
Findrassie, Elgin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total convenience floorspace 350-500 sqm GFA which could comprise a modern convenience format plus a small number of smaller additional units. • Additional space can be provided to accommodate retail, leisure and business services and comparison goods retail. • Total floorspace in region of 1,200-1,500 sqm GFA • Consideration to be given to other uses including public house/bar and community uses. • Phasing – initial commercial space (300-400sqm GFA) after 450th house and convenience format store by completion of 900th house.
Elgin South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total convenience floorspace of ca. 500-700 sq m GFA which could comprise a modern convenience-format store plus a small number of additional, smaller units. This could include convenience-format stores in each village centre. • Additional space can be provided to accommodate retail, leisure and business services and comparison goods retail. • Total floorspace in each of the two village centres should be in the region of 1000-1250 sq. m GFA. • Consideration to be given to other uses including public house/bar and community uses. • Phasing – initial commercial space (300-400sqm GFA) after 450th house for each development areas (east and west villages) and convenience format store by completion of 900th house for each development area.
Buckie South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total convenience floorspace of ca. 150-250 sq. m GFA which could comprise a small convenience-format store or one or two smaller units. • Additional space can be provided to accommodate retail, leisure and business services and comparison goods retail. • Total floorspace in region of 500-750 sqm GFA • Initial commercial space (ca 150-300 sq. m GFA) could be provided by the completion of the initial phase of development given existing residential areas.
Lochyhill Forres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total convenience floorspace 350-500 sqm GFA which could comprise a modern convenience format plus a small number of smaller additional units. • Additional space can be provided to accommodate retail, leisure and business services and comparison goods retail. • Total floorspace in region of 1,200-1,500 sqm GFA • Consideration to be given to other uses including public house/bar and community uses. <p>Phasing – initial commercial space (300-400sqm GFA) after 450th house and convenience format store by completion of site R3.</p>

Mosstodloch South	Small scale commercial/retail space encouraged.
Summary of Stakeholder Engagement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elgin BID – no response received. • Moray Chamber of Commerce – no response received. • Highlands and Islands Enterprise – no response received. • Developers and landowners associated with masterplan areas (Springfield, Robertsons, Barratt and landowners at Findrassie) – no response received. 	
Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider recommendations of the Moray Retail Study to update the network of centres. This will include considering identifying additional groups of shops and services not identified in the study that serve daily needs of neighbourhood. • Review town centre boundaries. • Consider potential new uses for the St Giles Shopping Centre in Elgin. • Consider if local position is required to be prevent increase in the number of and clusters of takeaways forming. • Consider restricting further drive through development where build up has been identified e.g. A96 east of Elgin. • Given the extent of permitted development rights and the ability to move more easily between uses, the continued need for Core Retail Areas requires to be reviewed. Whilst the Core Retail Area could no longer be used to restrict Class 4 Business there is potentially merit in continuing to identify these to support certain community and leisure uses as part of encouraging a greater and more viable mix of uses across town centres but restricting other uses (including residential) on ground floors. However, as the town centres across Moray are very diverse the extent of Core Retail Areas and how important they are in individual towns will be considered. • Reflect plans and strategies that aim to support the regeneration of our town centres in the new LDP. This will include considering the projects within ECCMP and TCIPs but also potentially reflecting any projects that emerge from the Town Centre Taskforce or Town Plan. • Consideration to be given to whether qualitative deficiency for small supermarket/large convenience format is to be addressed. • Consider recommendations in respect of retail provision with new neighbourhoods and reflecting these within the Proposed Plan. 	
Statements of Agreement	
None identified.	
Statements of Dispute	
None identified.	

Issue: Topic / Place	15. Rural Development
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 15(5) – the extent to which there are rural areas within the district in relation to where there has been a substantial decline in population.
Links to Evidence	<p>CD001 Moray Local Development Plan 2020 - Volume 1 CD160 Moray Business Property Needs Study 2023 CD028 Moray Local Development Plan Monitoring Report 2023 CD033 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – 2023 CD034 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – Appendix CD035 Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework – Appendix LSS CD063 Moray Hydrogen Strategy 2022 CD036 Moray Local Landscape Designation Review 2018 CD026 Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2024</p>
NPF 4 Context	
<p>National Planning Framework (NPF) 4 Policy 29 Rural Development is intended to provide a policy framework to encourage rural economic activity, innovation and diversification whilst ensuring that the distinctive character of the rural area and the service function of small towns, natural assets and cultural heritage are safeguarded and enhanced.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Moray is a region with outstanding natural resources and world-renowned brands. It is home to premier food and drink brands providing high end products through internationally recognised companies. The rural economy is diverse with different sectors ranging from fishing and agriculture to forestry, distilling and tourism.</p> <p>Spatial overview of existing patterns of development and pressures across Moray</p> <p>There are clear spatial patterns of development related to Moray’s indigenous industries and their locational needs alongside emerging needs from sectors including energy, net zero and renewables. Accommodating demand for these uses has led to development pressures in rural areas and on the periphery of Moray’s towns as set out below. These patterns of development and pressures alongside environmental assets have been spatially represented based on Local Housing Market Areas (LHMA). The LHMA are well aligned, and representative of the regions rural economy having been based around the main towns operating as service centres for the wider area.</p> <p>Graphic X provides a Moray wide spatial overview of each LHMA, supporting the written detail on the characteristics of the specific rural areas below.</p> <p>It is intended this approach will be further developed to provide a spatial framework to guide development in Moray’s rural areas based on local knowledge and demand/pressures identified through monitoring reports and therefore more reflective of local circumstances. The Urban Rural Classification 2020 set out in NPF 4 Policy 29 Rural Development. is considered to conflict with the identified development pressures for large scale industrial uses occurring in Speyside for example. Under the urban rural classification large areas of coastline would be classed as remote rural which opens them up for development. It is considered that the current stance to protect sensitive coastal areas from inappropriate development is still relevant. These areas do not represent fragile communities where the Council would be seeking to direct new development to. In addition to this the Urban Rural Classification</p>	

does not appear to consider environmental assets that will be embedded within the Council's framework for guiding development in rural areas.

See plan below – Environmental Assets and Development Pressures



Speyside LHMA

Economic characteristics of Speyside LHMA

Within Speyside the economy revolves predominantly around farming, forestry, food and drink and tourism. The Business Needs Study identifies by far the greatest concentration of employment in the manufacturing sector is in Speyside and Glenlivet. In 2021, total employment in the manufacture of food and beverages was 3,250 in Moray. Almost half of the jobs in the sector (1,600) were in Speyside and Glenlivet, which hosts the Glenlivet, Glenfiddich and MacCallan distilleries which are the largest single-malt producers by volume globally, as well as the Walkers Shortbread factory in Aberlour.

Existing Patterns of Development and Pressure

Speyside is currently experiencing significant development pressure. Several distillery expansions have been undertaken in recent years and many are upgrading sites, visitor experiences and considering facilities such as biomass and anaerobic digestion to meet their own carbon neutral targets. Rothes in particular is experiencing pressure for large scale development to support the distilling industry. Consent was recently granted for 60,000 sq. m of whisky maturation storage on the edge of the town. The lack of large industrial sites in Speyside and the ad hoc nature of the requirements from the whisky industry has meant the development will be constructed on an undesignated site. A large new maltings facility was also consented on the edge of Rothes to support the distilling industry with production closer to the customer base. This was located partially on a designated site which was not large enough or the right shape to accommodate the development.

There is high demand for employment land sites in locations where there are no designated sites or a lack of sites large enough to accommodate user needs. There is an identified shortfall of employment land in Speyside (see Schedule 13 Business and Industry) to meet identified requirements for the MLDP 2027. Given the concentration of whisky distilleries in Speyside there is likely to be a continuing and increasing demand in the area for whisky related proposals. The implications of this need to be fed into the MLDP2027 and to support this there needs to be further engagement with the whisky industry.

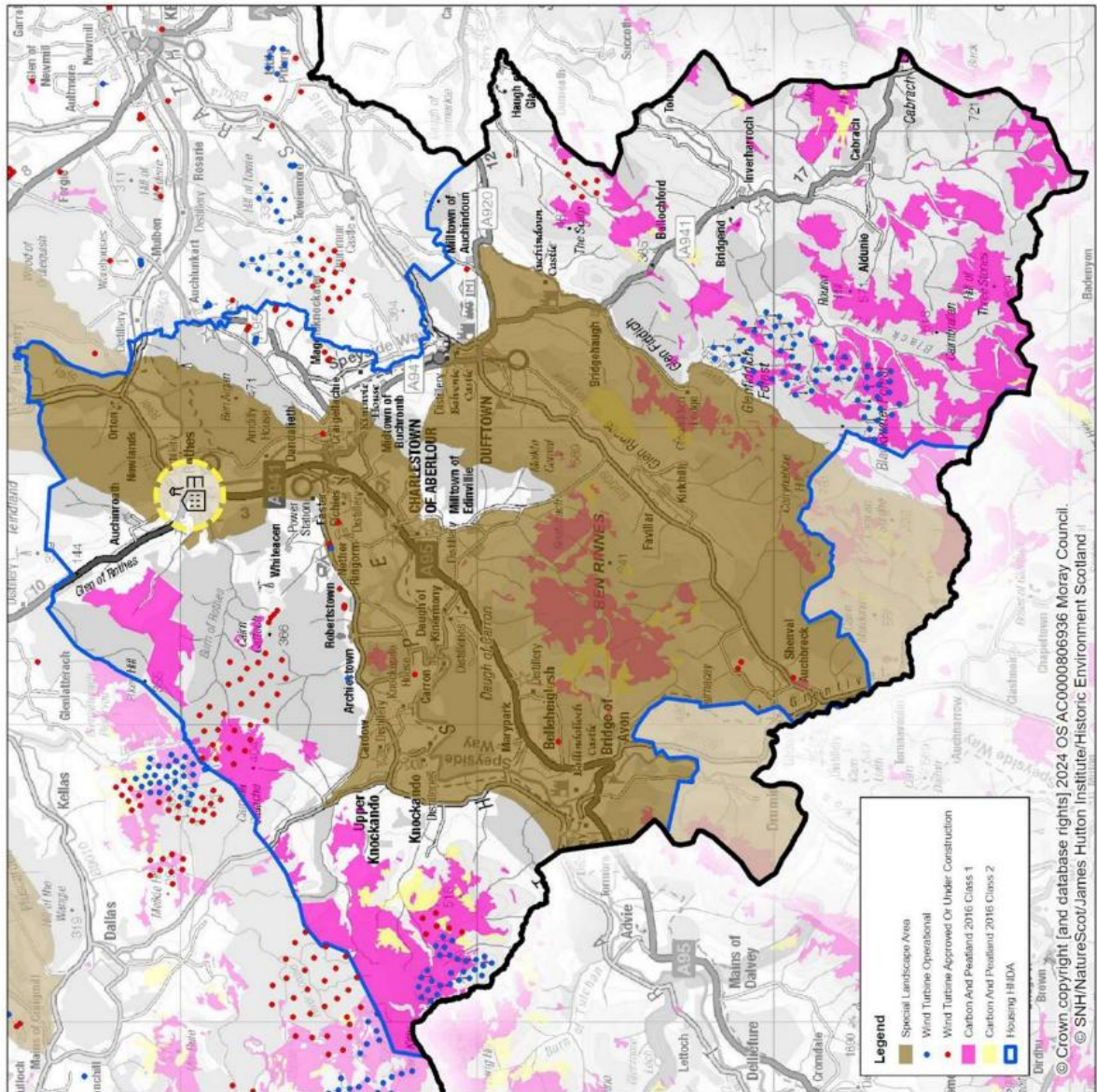
The Moray Council Hydrogen Strategy identifies Aberlour as a pilot project for hydrogen generation due to the concentration of distilleries and major transport logistics companies in close proximity. A specific site is yet to be identified; however, the development of the hydrogen economy will see requirements for land for hydrogen generation, hydrogen storage, refuelling stations within Speyside and across the wider Moray area. Other industrial user sites have been identified as having potential to be hydrogen sites including onshore wind installations located within rural Moray many within Speyside. As the strategy evolves the short-, medium- and long-term projects will be developed, and land requirements will become clearer and will inform the MLDP 2027.

Over the last 20 years there has been pressure for onshore wind energy across Moray. Schedule 5 Energy provides further detail and identifies two areas within Speyside where significant cumulative impacts have/are emerging at Dallas/ Knockando Moor and Cabrach which have resulted in significant adverse landscape and visual impacts.

Rural Development – Environmental assets and development pressures

Speyside LHMA

- Landscape and visual impact and impact on deep peat associated with onshore wind
- Landscape and visual impact associated with large scale warehousing, maltings and bioenergy centres to support whisky distilling
- Impact of tourism proposals on the Spey Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA)



Buckie LHMA

Economic characteristics of Buckie LHMA

Traditionally, in Buckie and the surrounding coastal villages the principal indigenous industries have been fishing, marine industries and farming. A decline in the fishing industry has seen a shift towards employment offshore. More recently the local economy has benefitted from the emergence of offshore wind and the opportunities associated with Buckie Harbour becoming an operations and maintenance base.

Existing development patterns and pressures

In terms of offshore wind demand is likely to be heavily concentrated around Buckie with the harbour an important location for operations and maintenance activity. There may be spin off supply chain opportunities and these must be directed to the existing employment land designations at March Road Industrial Estate. At this time there is no indication that there will be any significant pressure for rural development because of offshore wind.

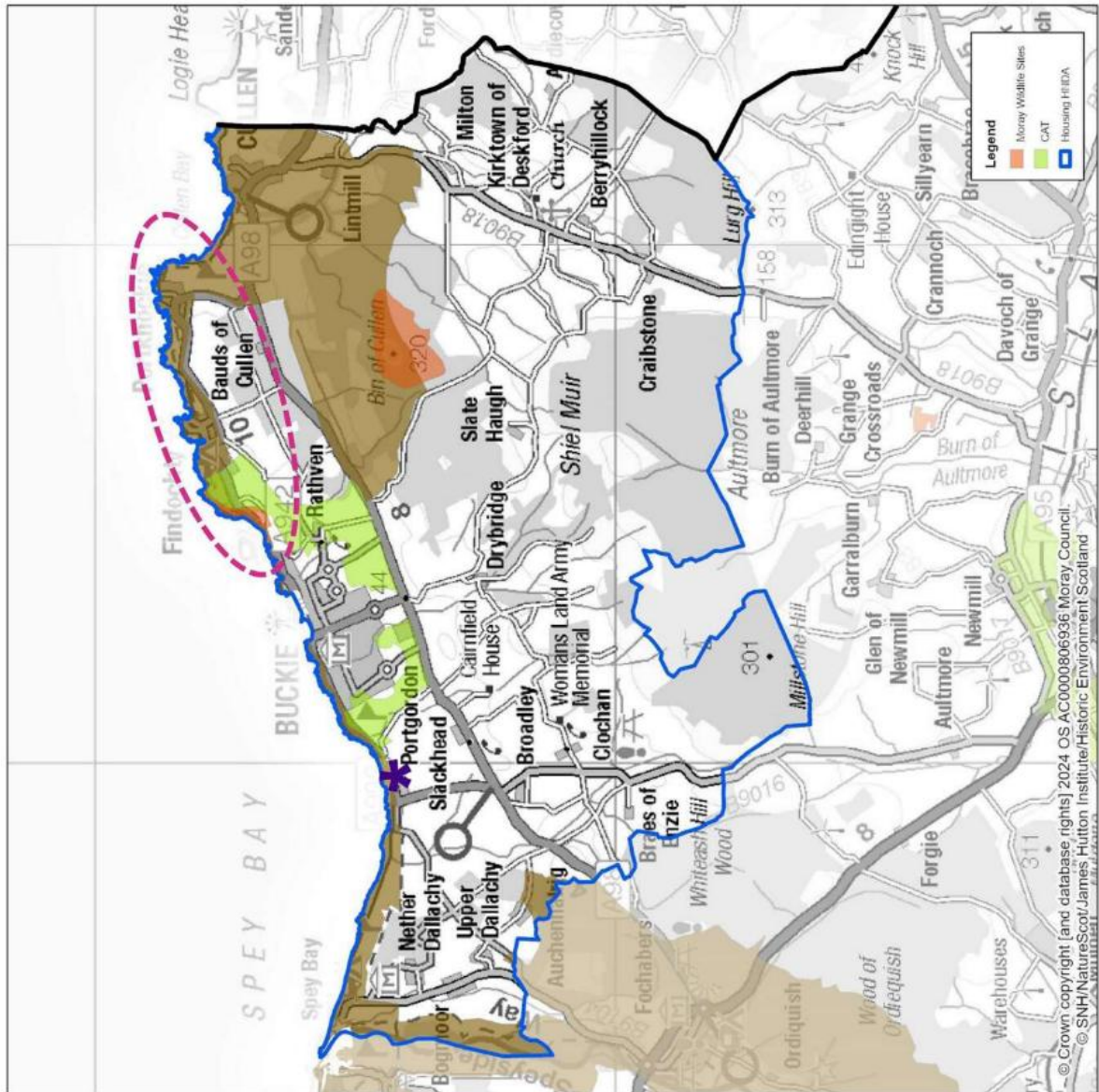
The 2023 Monitoring Report does however highlight, in rural area surrounding Buckie there have been recent proposals for anaerobic digesters. At the time of writing these have still to be determined but the proposals are not located on designated employment land sites. Due to their nature these proposals are often located in rural areas and can be of significant size and massing. While these applications cannot be prejudged, these types of applications could have significant impact on the landscape and supply of designated employment land serving the Buckie LHMA. There have also been pressures for supporting infrastructure for the distilling industry including warehousing and anaerobic digestion. This may indicate an emerging trend that could also influence the approach to requirements for locational justification for new development.

Although it is not presenting as a significant issue currently, there may be pressure from renewable energy for example solar arrays and tourism related proposals for along the Moray coast. The Buckie LHMA includes the Portgordon to Cullen Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA). Schedule 16 Productive Places provides more detail and references developing a tailored approach to tourism opportunities within rural areas. There is ongoing work to identify any pressures relating to other types of tourism related development such as short term lets that will inform the MLDP 2027. See Schedule 8a Housing for further information.

Rural Development – Environmental assets and development pressures

Buckie LHMA

- Pressure on Buckie Countryside Around Town (CAT) designation from renewable energy infrastructure such as anaerobic digestion
- Tourism proposals and impact on coastal Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)
- Landscape and visual impact associated with large scale maltings, warehousing and anaerobic digestion to support whisky industry



Keith LHMA

Economic Characteristics of Keith LHMA

Keith's traditional rural industries include farming and distilling and formerly textiles.

Existing pattern of development and pressures

The Keith and Blackhillock areas are coming under increasing development pressure, on a piecemeal basis, from development that supports the National Grid and there is no forward planning to identify this infrastructure. There have been a number of consents for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) on non-designated sites outwith the Keith settlement boundary. In recognition of the pressure in this area, the Council commissioned the Moray – Keith Green Energy and Infrastructure Framework 2023. The framework has been developed to make best use of surrounding land and appropriately control the opportunities. Based on a landscape sensitivity assessment, the framework identifies potential development sites for a range of uses and associated landscape mitigation required. This work will feed directly into the MLDP 2027.

Rural Development – Environmental assets and development pressures

Keith LHMA

- Impact on employment, land supply and Keith Countryside Around Towns (CAT) designation from battery energy storage solutions (BESS)
- Landscape and visual impact and impact on deep peat associated with onshore wind



Elgin LHMA

Economic Characteristics of Elgin LHMA

Elgin is the administrative and commercial centre for Moray providing services to the surrounding areas. Within its rural area indigenous industries are predominantly made up of farming, forestry and fishing in the coastal villages. Food and drink are important sectors with several distilleries operating within a few miles of Elgin.

Existing development patterns and pressures

As set out in the Monitoring Report 2023, outwith Keith there has also been interest for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) on designated employment land sites. This includes an application for a BESS in Elgin. This trend has potential implications for the MLDP 2027 as these facilities do not fall within the use classes normally associated with industrial estates (use class 4 business, use class 5 general industrial, and class 6 storage or distribution) This type of application could have an impact on the Countryside Around Towns (CAT) designations covering Moray's 5 main towns (see Environmental Assets section below), the supply of designated land serving the Elgin LHMA and create pressure for development on undesignated land.

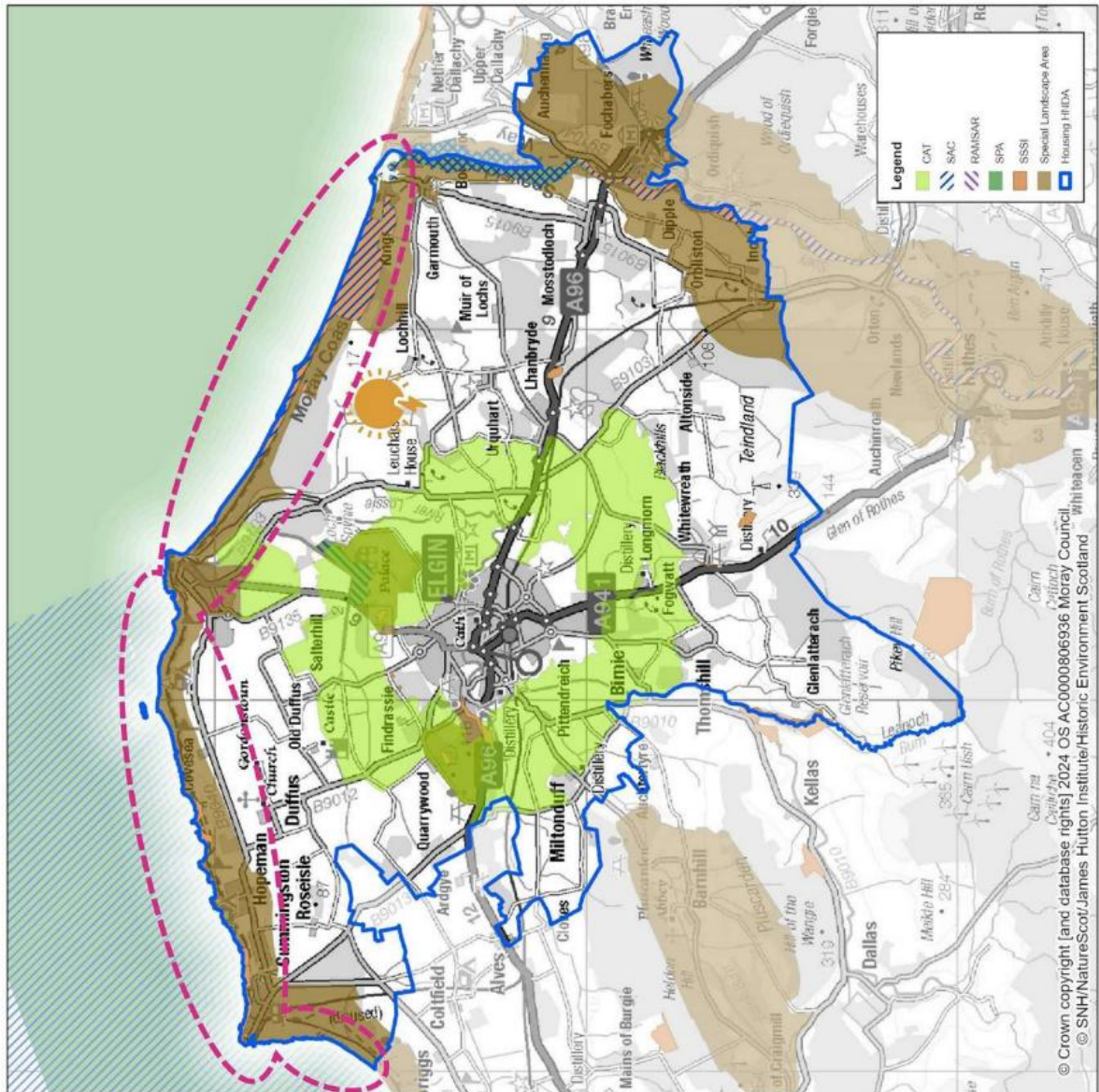
The Elgin LHMA includes the Coastal SLA from Burghead to Lossiemouth Coast and part of Lossiemouth to Portgordon coast. Although it is not presenting as a significant issue currently, there may be pressure for tourism related proposals for example along the Moray coast and its woodlands. Schedule 16 Productive Places provides more detail and references developing a tailored approach to tourism opportunities within rural areas.

There have been some development pressures for large scale industrial uses presenting themselves including anaerobic digestion and expansion of existing large employers on undesignated sites. Demand for employment land in general is being met by existing designated employment land sites predominantly located within Elgin. Engagement with the various industries is needed to plan for future investment and expansion to inform the MLDP 2027.

Rural Development – Environmental assets and development pressures

Elgin LHMA

- Impact on employment land supply resulting from renewable energy infrastructure such as battery energy storage solutions (BESS)
- Pressure on Elgin Countryside Around Town (CAT) designation from renewable energy infrastructure such as anaerobic digestion
- Expansion of existing large scale employers onto undesignated sites
- Solar arrays
- Tourism proposals impacting on fragile habitats such as coastal woodland



Forres LHMA**Economic characteristics of the Forres LHMA**

Forres is a market town providing services to the wider area. In the rural parts of the area the indigenous industries are predominantly made up of farming, forestry and distilling with several distilleries near Forres.

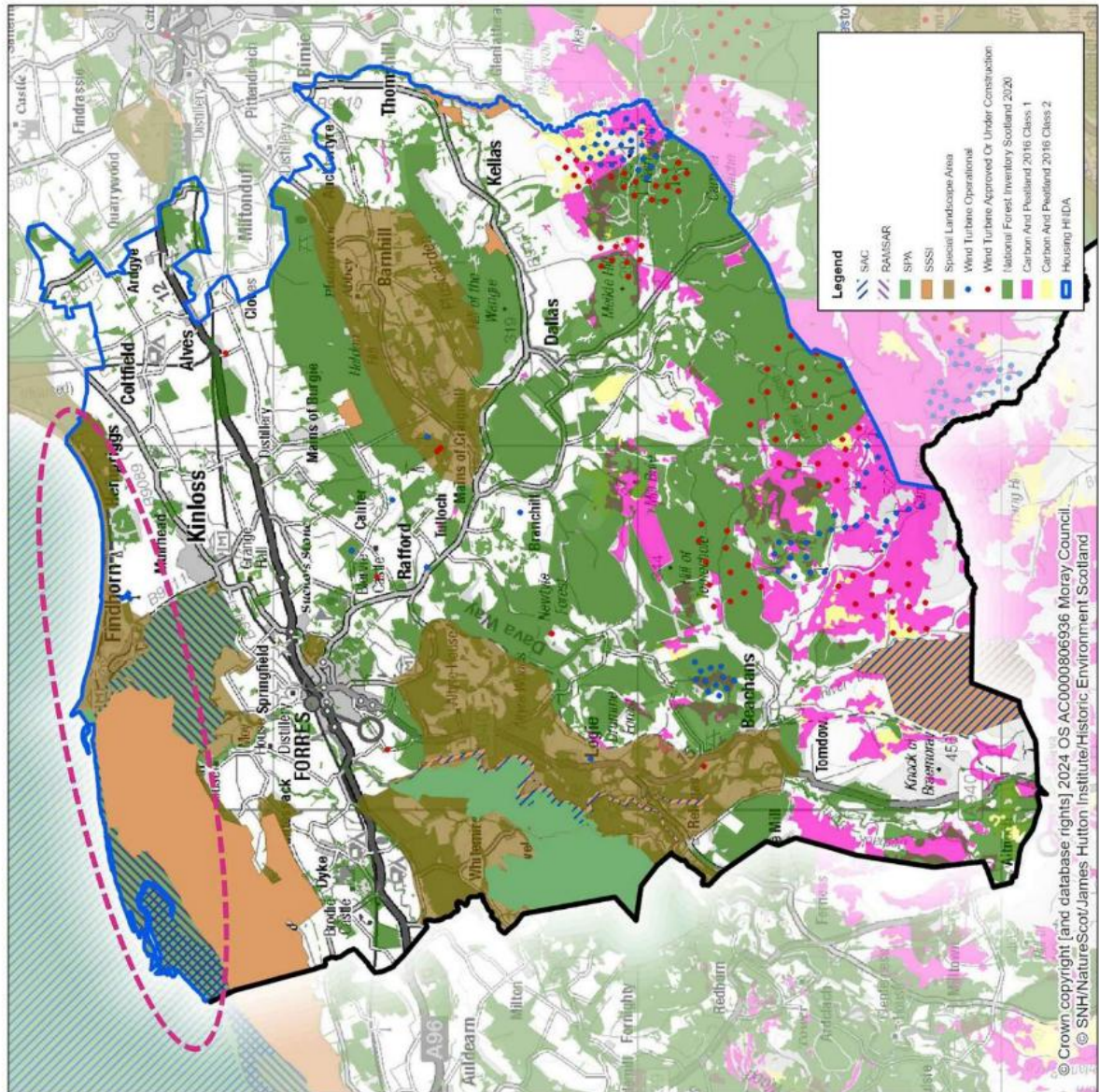
Existing pattern of development and pressures

Current demand for employment land is being met predominantly by the existing designated employment land site at the Enterprise Park Forres. The Forres LHMA also includes the Culbin to Burghead Coast SLA which will be sensitive to any development pressure from tourism proposals in the future and any increase in visitor numbers to fragile habitats for example Culbin Forest. There is also ongoing pressure on the rural landscape from onshore wind.

Rural Development – Environmental assets and development pressures

Forres LHMA

- Tourism proposals impacting on fragile habitats and coastal woodland
- Landscape and visual impact and impact on deep peat associated with onshore wind



Environmental Assets

Alongside promoting sustainable economic development, it is important the high-quality environment and natural assets that Moray is renowned for are safeguarded.

Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)

Moray has 13 Special (SLAs) identified in the MLDP 2020, aimed at protecting and enhancing the special character and qualities of Moray's most valued landscapes. There are 5 SLA's that will have sensitivities to the types of development and pressures identified above.

The Spey Valley SLA has experienced pressure from development to support the whisky distilling industry and onshore wind. The Moray Local Landscape Designation Review Final Report 2018 sets out the reasons for the Spey Valley SLA designation that include the diverse and handsome landscape of broad gently weaving river, floodplain farmland, wooded valley sides and distinctive settlements together with the romance associated with the Spey due to its connection with whisky distilling. The whisky industry whilst contributing to the landscape character of the area can also have an impact on its scenic qualities. The Moray Local Landscape Designation Review identified that large buildings, usually associated with the whisky industry, can impact on views and the character of the Spey Valley and conflict with the perception of the strongly rural qualities of this landscape.

The Moray coast is covered by 4 SLA's covering Culbin to Burghead Coast, Burghead to Lossie Coast, Lossie to Portgordon Coast and Portgordon to Cullen Coast. The Moray Local Landscape Designation Review identifies the Moray coast as being sensitive to quarry operations, tourism proposals with areas like Culbin also sensitive to increasing visitor numbers potentially affecting wildlife and fragile saltmarsh habitat. Although not strictly rural development this area would also be adversely affected by housing proposals.

Countryside Around Towns (CAT)

Countryside Around Towns's (CAT's) are designated in MLDP 2020 where there is highest development pressure and aim to prevent development sprawl into the countryside. The Council is currently undertaking a review and will assess the current CAT designations in Elgin, Forres, Keith, Buckie, and Lossiemouth. Details of the purpose of the review are set out in Schedule 2 Biodiversity, Natural Places, Green and Blue Infrastructure. The main outcome of the review is to provide an up-to-date assessment of the current CAT designation to ensure it continues to deliver a balance between development needs and the protection of the area around pressurised settlements. The review will be informed by the development pressures identified within this schedule in particular proposals for battery storage and AD plants.

Soils

Moray has a number of areas of prime agricultural land, peatland and carbon rich soils that need to be protected from inappropriate development.

Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2024

The Council is preparing an updated Woodland and Forestry Strategy. The majority of Moray's woodland and forests accommodate tracks and paths for cycling, walking, horse riding and are used to host regional, national and international events such as orienteering. Long distance trails run through the woodlands and forests including the Dava Way, Moray Coast Trail and Speyside. The strategy will consider the impact of pressures from tourism and commercial forestry and will inform the MLDP 2027.

Protecting Moray's Environmental Assets

Recommendations within the Moray Local Landscape Designation Review Final Report 2018 were embedded into the MLDP 2020. Policy EP3 Special Landscape Areas and Landscape Character requires

Careful siting and the highest quality of design alongside a clear locational need and demonstration that there are no alternative sites. The nature and level of the demand for large industrial users in rural areas supports a continued need to require locational justification and evidence of no other suitable sites for new development within SLA's to protect their special qualities. This needs to be considered in tandem with the identification of rural employment land sites in the least environmentally sensitive areas.

Identification of rural investment sites

The demand and pressures identified above justifies exploring options for the identification of rural employment land sites across Moray to accommodate inward investment. This would require further engagement with the energy and renewables sectors alongside indigenous industries. Some engagement has already been undertaken as part of the Business Property Needs Survey. Given constraints in terms of infrastructure and topography, site identification could prove to be difficult, especially in Speyside. In terms of SLA's the 2023 Monitoring Report evidences the pressure from indigenous industries ranging from proposals for timber stacking and workshops, agricultural buildings to large scale bonded warehouses and maltings. This emphasises the need to identify rural employment land sites to direct large scale development proposals to least environmentally sensitive locations where no robust locational justification has been provided.

Community priorities

Extensive engagement was undertaken with the community at Evidence Report stage. Identified community priorities related to the rural economy included the economic opportunities associated with tourism, specifically investing in green tourism and the potential for Moray to be a leader in this area. There was support for a Moray Coastal Natural Heritage Park and the associated benefits to wellbeing, tourism and the economy. Moray was viewed as an ideal location for remote workers, and this could be supported further by investing in broadband and co-working spaces closer to where people live. The economic, environmental and social benefits associated with investing in community energy schemes were highlighted as an opportunity, alongside the wider distribution of windfarm community benefits across Moray to share the economic benefit.

Currently, 8 community groups from across Moray are committed to preparing a draft Local Place Plan in 2024 which will in turn influence the next LDP.

Population in rural areas with substantial decline in population

In terms of understanding population change over time in rural areas, release of the 2022 census data is awaited and when published analysis will be undertaken to see how rural populations have changed over time. Where relevant this data will feed into the framework for guiding rural development.

Conclusion

All the ongoing work and studies identified above will be used to inform the tailored approach to rural development. The approach devised will take account of the characteristics of the areas rural economy and its indigenous industries and be informed by an understanding of the demand and pressures across Moray. As part of this the Council will create a spatial framework for guiding rural development that will be more reflective of local circumstances than the Urban Rural Classification 2020. To protect the area's identified environmental assets, development needs to be directed to the least environmentally sensitive locations and must be supported by robust evidence of locational need. At present large-scale expansions of indigenous industries and development of land to support emerging technologies is happening on an ad hoc basis. There is a need to continue to engage with the energy and renewables industry and local indigenous industries to have a better understanding of potential future investment that will better inform options for the identification of large rural investment sites. It is accepted that there will inevitably still be ad hoc requirements for land.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Copies of this schedule were sent to:

- Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) – See statement of agreement below
- Scotch Whisky Association
- Crofting Commission

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- Prepare a tailored approach to rural development in Moray recognising the existing patterns of development, identified demand, pressures and need to protect environmental assets.
- Further develop the approach to spatially representing identified development patterns, pressures and environmental assets across rural Moray to create a framework for guiding development in Moray's rural areas.
- Tailored approach must recognise Moray's primary indigenous industries and their needs including developing a definition of Moray's indigenous industries.
- Work closely with Moray's indigenous industries to identify long term needs and liaise with energy sectors to better understand long term investment plans.
- Explore the identification of rural investment sites in areas of Moray that have been identified as experiencing pressure to release undesignated land for development.
- Consider the type of information that constitutes robust evidence of locational need.
- Analyse 2022 Census rural populations data and identify any impacts on spatial approach to rural development.

Statements of Agreement

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Agree with sensitivities in relation to impact of tourism on rural and coastal areas, however, it should also be recognised that tourism is a significant income generator for small business and community organisations. This may be covered in Schedule 16.

Stakeholder Engagement: Any current discussions with Energy developers should also be taken into consideration aligned with opportunities to maximise economic and social benefits for supply chain and community organisations.

The issues raised are noted by these are addressed in Schedule 16 Tourism and Schedule 5 Energy. On that basis no change to this schedule is proposed.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	16. Productive Places – Tourism
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended, section 15(5)(a) ‘the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district’.</p> <p>Section 15 (5)(b) the principal purposes for which land is used.</p>
Links to Evidence	<p>CD160 Moray Business Property Needs Study 2023</p> <p>CD161 Moray Economic Strategy 2022</p> <p>CD162 Moray Growth Deal – Full Deal Document</p> <p>CD165 Tourism in Moray – The Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray</p> <p>CD166 Visit Moray Speyside Tourism Business Improvement District Business Plan</p> <p>CD167 Annual Visitor Summary and Economic Impact Statistics (STEAM Report) 2022</p> <p>CD168 Visit Moray Speyside Business Barometer Quarter 3 2023</p> <p>CD169 Moray Routes: Bright Futures Strategic Infrastructure Plan</p> <p>CD170 Committee Report 2nd September 2020 – Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund and Coastal Communities Fund Proposal - Coast to Country</p> <p>CD026 Draft Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2024</p>
National Planning Framework 4 Context	
<p>NPF4 seeks to encourage and support sustainable tourism development that benefits local people, is consistent with net zero and nature commitments, and inspires people to visit Scotland. LDPs should support the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector. The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations which reflect opportunities for tourism development by taking full account of the needs of communities, visitors, the industry and the environment. Relevant national and local sector driven tourism strategies should also be taken into account.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Context – Tourism Moray</p> <p>Tourism is a major part of Moray’s economy, with expenditure and activity of tourists supporting 2,329 jobs directly and providing an economic impact of over £148m in 2022. According to the Scottish Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) in 2022, of the total 706,999 visitors to Moray in 2022 466,083 were made by visitors staying in Moray as part of a holiday or short break with the others day visitors. This equates to a total of 1.79 million visitor days. The value of tourism in activity was estimated to be £148m compared to £134m in 2019 (pre covid). On average, visitors staying in Moray stay 2.5 nights and spend £33 million on local accommodation. Between 2021 and 2022 staying visitor numbers increased by 27.5% and total day visitors increased by 56.38%. The average length of stay for all visitors staying in serviced accommodation is 1.9 days and for non-serviced accommodation this rises to 7.3 days, indicating a higher proportion of weekly rentals. Overnight visitors typically have a greater economic impact than day visitors, making a greater proportion of employment opportunities for the sector. Staying visitors are estimated to have an economic impact of £284 per visit compared to £62 for day visitors. In 2022, the day visitor market accounted for 10.1% of the value of tourism activity (£15m). Meanwhile, the staying visitor market accounted for the remaining 89.9% of economic value (£133m).</p>	

Moray has a rich history and stunning landscape which make it an attractive destination for visitors. With half of Scotland's malt whisky distilleries within Moray many of which offer distillery tours Speyside is a key destination for whisky enthusiasts. Visitors can also experience Moray's rich history and heritage by visiting pictish sites, historic castles (including Brodie, Auchindoun and Ballindalloch), following the "Real Macbeth" story and visiting Elgin Cathedral. Moray's diverse landscape, from mountains to coast, is an attraction in its own right but the landscape also provides opportunities for outdoor pursuits and wildlife watching. Moray is home to three long distance trails (the Speyside Way, Moray Coast Trail and Dava Way) with the Moray Way combining parts of these trails to provide a circular route that takes you on a circular route through Moray's diverse landscape.

Visit Moray Speyside Tourism Business Improvement District

Visit Moray Speyside work as a destination marketing organisation and are also a Tourism Business Improvement District (BID). They represent the interests of almost 400 tourism businesses across Moray. Following the ballot the BID company began in April 2020 with its purpose to deliver the objectives of the Moray Speyside Tourism BID Business Plan.

To ensure the Tourism BID proposals address issues facing tourism businesses a survey was carried out in November 2018 to January 2019. This identified the following priority areas and opportunities.

- Marketing of the visitor offer.
- Support for events and festivals.
- Collective tourism voice and advocacy
- Better visitor experience
- Extending the visitor season and improving the night-time economy
- Training, advice and support to help with digital and online opportunities.

The key areas of work set out in the business plan are set out below.

- Marketing Moray Speyside nationally and internationally – including marketing to the travel trade and consumers, establishing an engaging brand, representation at key UK and overseas expos, and familiarisation trips for travel trade, social media influencers and online leaders.
- Improving the visitor experience – including improving visitor information online and on the ground, development of a Moray Speyside App, supporting events and festivals that aim to extend the visitor season, and working with partners to grow the value of specialist tourism to attract conferences and seminars.
- Support for business – provide a strong unified voice for industry and lobby for improvement to infrastructure and visitor services including signage, transport links, and public toilet and waste disposal provision, creation of a Moray Speyside customer service standard and introduce local tourism networks to ensure every part of Moray benefits.

Moray Speyside BID will be creating the next five-year business plan to cover 2025-2030.

Local Visitor Levy

The Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill (SP Bill 28) was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 24 May 2023. If passed by the Scottish Parliament and following Royal Assent, the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill will give local authorities the power to apply a levy on stays in overnight accommodation based on a percentage of the accommodation cost, with the percentage rate to be set locally. Funding raised from a visitor levy will be required to be spent on the visitor economy, such as facilities or services substantially for or used by visitors. At a meeting of Moray Council on 27th September it was agreed to support in principle the concept of raising funds through a Local Visitor Levy.

Quarterly Visit Moray Speyside undertake a Business Barometer to obtain feedback from business on ongoing performance and confidence in the future. The Q3 2023 survey completed by 59 businesses included questions about the Visitor Levy which included a question if the tourism levy was introduced how the income generated should be spent. This provides an indication what the industry considers is needed to support tourism in Moray. The top 10 suggestions were.

1. Public toilets
2. Better transport
3. Roads
4. Cleanliness/tidiness
5. Visitor information services
6. Marketing and promotion
7. Waste disposal/recycling services.
8. Outdoor activities for visitors
9. Signage for/ additional EV charging
10. Direct support for tourism businesses.

Public Engagement

Public drop in exhibitions as part of early engagement on the new Local Development Plan were held across 8 towns from March 2023 to September 2023 with over 300 people attending. Tourism was a key theme within comments in particular around “green tourism” and making the most of Moray’s natural assets. Support for a Moray Coastal Heritage Park was also expressed.

A number of comments were also submitted through the Call for Ideas on supporting the economy.

- Promoting longer tourism stays through better funding and promotion.
- More campsites and areas where campervans are welcome.

Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF)

In March 2022, Moray Council were awarded a grant of £31,500 from Visit Scotland’s Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) to develop a Strategic Tourism Infrastructure Development Plans. A cross-section project team from Moray Council developed the Moray Routes Development Plan and identified enhancement of long distance active tourism infrastructure the priority for the plan. The plan aims to deliver long term benefits to the visitor experience, positively impacting the visitor economy and the local landscape. ‘Moray Routes’ comprise the network of key walking and cycling leisure routes across Moray and include:

- Moray Way
- Speyside Way
- Dava Way
- Moray Coastal Trail
- Rothes Way
- Isla Way

The Moray Routes: Bright Futures plan structured the prioritisation of future project applications based upon two separate Tiers. The two Tier-1 projects consisted of strategic Moray-wide proposals to enhance visitor experience through improved interpretation and digital infrastructure associated with the routes. The six Tier-2 projects were place based proposals aimed at improving path infrastructure along specific sections of the Moray Routes, where there was an identified need. Officers are now developing the prioritised projects with further applications submitted to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund for funding to develop a route between Rothes and Craigellachie and also redevelopment of the Speyside Way at Spey Bay to Portgordon and onto Buckie.

The Coast to Country project was successful in securing Rural Tourism Infrastructure Funding in September 2021. The Coast to Country project is an integral part of a Moray wide strategic staycation programme. The project was delivered in partnership between the Council, Visit Moray Speyside, HIE, and various Community Trusts and Associations. The project aimed to create a network of facilities across the region that will contribute to tourism and relieve pressure on local beauty spots. By upgrading the infrastructure, the aim is to provide an improved visitor experience whilst reducing the negative impacts local communities have been experiencing, in particular from growth in the motorhome sector. The project was completed in October 2023 and provided:

- A new overnight motorhome facility in Cullen
- A new carpark with upgraded footpath to the iconic Bow Fiddle Rock in Portknockie
- Two upgraded toilet facilities in Findhorn and provision of a new toilet facility in Ballindalloch
- Carpark enhancements at Ben Rinnes, Fiddich Park in Craigellachie, and Ballindalloch
- Improved signage and pedestrian/vehicle counters at the aforementioned sites
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure at Findhorn and Fiddich Park

Draft Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2024

The draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy supports greater promotion of Moray's woodlands and forests for recreation and tourism including consideration of a Moray Forest Park designation in recognition of the importance of woodlands and forests to the region. The strategy states the Council work with partners including Visit Scotland, Visit Moray Speyside, Forestry and Land Scotland and landowners to identify ways of increasing visitors, addressing any improvements needed to wider visitor facilities, encourage greater investment in recreational facilities in forests and consider ways in which assistance can be given to encourage landowners to provide and maintain visitor facilities such as car parks and footpaths in woodlands.

Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray

Highland and Island's Enterprise's Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray was developed prior to covid and is in need of updating. The vision to 2025 for Moray in the Strategy is to "be known nationally and internationally as an exceptionally attractive destination for leisure and business visitors, offering memorable experiences, based on the area's unique assets, including malt whisky, the heritage of Macbeth, its pure natural environment and superb food using local food." The strategy objectives include doubling the economic value of tourism, doubling the size of the tourism related workforce with at least 80% working year round, living locally and fully skilled in their job and trained in customer care, and to achieve annual occupancy of service accommodation rooms of at least 75%; and at least 65% occupancy of self-catering units. Maintaining a high quality environment, visitor orientation, improving access to and within Moray, developing local supply chains, building on authentic experiences, serving the growing interest in nature based tourism, and substantially increasing bed space in Moray including for large groups attending conferences or attending large events are identified as opportunities to deliver the objectives.

Moray Economic Strategy 2022

Moray Community Planning Partnership updated the Moray Economic Strategy in 2022 taking into consideration the impacts on Moray from the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit and the cost of living crisis. The overall vision is for Moray to be "*A distinctive and attractive place to live, work, operate a business or social enterprise, study and visit*". The Strategy identifies adventure tourism as a growth opportunity given Moray's natural assets, the growth within this sub sector and the increasing awareness of the importance of visitor infrastructure and sustainable transport modes. The Strategy also notes that supporting town centres, an evening economy and more lifestyle opportunities will aid regeneration and attract more tourists to spend time and money there.

Moray Growth Deal

The Moray Growth Deal builds on the existing strengths of Moray's culture, tourism and manufacturing sectors, plus development of other sectors. It aims to address challenges to facilitate economic growth that is sustainable, fair and inclusive. The deal will see investment of over £100 million across eight strategic projects. In Elgin the Cultural Quarter project has three key elements that aim to support inclusive economic growth and cultural expansion of the city and wider region. Refurbishment of Grant Lodge to create a high-quality heritage attraction is proposed. Refurbishment, extension and rebranding of Elgin town hall is proposed to create an improved cultural offering and support local creative industries. The final project is a high quality hotel.

Moray Business Property Needs Study 2023

To inform the Moray Local Development Plan 2027 (MLDP 2027) a Business Property Needs study was commissioned to provide up to date information and analysis of current and future demand for business property in Moray. Sustainable tourism was identified as a sector with demand. The study noted with the number of businesses now exceeding pre pandemic levels this could lead to demand for class 4 business space, but demand was more likely with class 7 and 11.

Planned Engagement

Moray Council officers are planning to work with Visit Scotland and Visit Moray Speyside to engage with tourism businesses and explore potential tourism development opportunities. Opportunities identified would be considered for inclusion within the new plan.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Visit Moray Speyside – statement of agreement below.

Visit Scotland – no response received.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise – no response received.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- Future policy approaches should reflect the importance of the tourism industry to the Moray economy.
- The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations for tourism opportunities.
- Consideration to be given to if a tailored approach to tourism opportunities within rural areas.
- Work with Moray's tourism sector and Visit Scotland to identify long term needs and opportunities.
- Explore opportunities for Moray Forest Park

Statements of Agreement

Visit Moray Speyside noted their agreement with the evidence base.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	17. Culture & Creativity
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended, Section 15 (5) • The principal cultural, social and built heritage characteristics of the district; • The desirability of maintaining an appropriate number and range of cultural venues and facilities (including in particular, but not limited to, live music venues) in the district.
Links to Evidence	<p>CD161 Moray Economic Strategy - 2022 CD165 Tourism in Moray – The Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray CD171 Helen Avenell Heritage Associates & Moray: Arts Development Engagement – Cultural Sector Mapping Report July 2023 CD172 Moray Cultural Sector Mapping database 2023 CD088 Elgin City Centre Masterplan 2021 CD089 Aberlour Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022 CD090 Buckie Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022 CD091 Dufftown Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022 CD092 Forres Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022 CD093 Keith Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022 CD094 Lossiemouth Town Centre Improvement Plan – 2022 CD162 Moray Growth Deal Full Deal Document CD163 Culture Radar ‘Sustainable Future for Heritage and Culture in Moray’ CD173 Discover Moray’s Great Places – Evaluation Report 2020 CD174 Discover Moray’s Great Places – Interpretation Plan and Action Plan April 2019</p>
National Planning Framework 4 Context	
<p>NPF4 seeks to ensure that local distinctive places reflect the diversity of communities and support regeneration and town centre vibrancy, that cultural and creative industries are expanded, provide jobs and investment, and that communities have access to cultural and creative industries.</p>	
Summary of Evidence	
<p>Moray’s Great Places & Town Centre Improvement Plans</p> <p>Within Moray there are a wide variety of settlements all of which have their own unique history and identity. Many of these settlements continue to celebrate local cultural and historical events which are unique to their locality. NPF4 seeks to protect the traditions and community events and acknowledges that these can play a significant role in terms of supporting the regeneration and vitality of individual settlements but also the wider Moray economy.</p> <p>A significant amount of work was previously undertaken under the Moray’s Great Places project which sought to showcase and promote history, traditions, and cultural events across Moray. The work that has been undertaken as part of this project can be fed into the next LDP so that it can proactively support local communities, their economies, and their cultural heritage. Work from this project has already been fed into existing TCIP’s and other town centre projects ensuring that there is a continuity in the “branding” across Moray, acknowledging the importance that cultural heritage has on the wider economy.</p> <p>Town Centre Improvement Plans (TCIP’s)</p>	

Moray Council approved a number of Town Centre Improvement Plans. The TCIP's set out a range of proposals to support the regeneration of the town centres which include bringing vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use, improving active travel connections, heritage trails, greening and other streetscape improvements in order to create vibrant, attractive, green, health, safer and inclusive town centres. The TCIP's provide a framework for investment and attracting external funding whether projects are led by the Council, a community group, or a partnership of both.

Within these plans there are several references to the role that heritage and culture can play in the regeneration of these settlements. As such projects relating to signage, heritage trails, public realm improvements, and public art projects were identified. Continuity to the branding will be achieved through work done on the Moray's Great Places Project which will improve the visitor experience across Moray. Work is currently ongoing in delivering a number of these projects and the TCIP's will feed into the next LDP.

Cultural Sector Mapping: Moray Report

As part of the work undertaken for the Cultural Quarter Project, the Council commissioned a report by Helen Avenell Heritage Associates (HAHA) and Moray: Arts Development Engagement (MADE). The purpose of this report was to understand and consolidate a picture of the cultural landscape in Moray. The report found that there is a wide-ranging art, heritage, and cultural offering across Moray that fell within those three sectors. However, given the fragmented and voluntary nature of these groups collating up to date evidence is challenging.

Cultural venues and groups range from more formal museums that fall in the heritage sector to the arts sector which relates to more third sector and community groups. However, the report highlights some key and similar conclusions that face the sector which is that there is a lack of funding to support groups as well as a lack of alignment and strategic thinking with arts and heritage assets to maximise economic growth and attract potential funding. Similarly, many of these organisations rely on volunteers which makes them vulnerable and naturally focussed on their own survival.

As part of this research attempts were made to create a database of all cultural venues and groups across Moray. However, it must be understood that due to the fragmented and voluntary nature of the sector it would be impossible to have a full and detailed picture. The research collated data on cultural venues and groups which allows for these to be spatially mapped. The table below shows the number of heritage, arts, and cultural venues that were included in the database. **Please note as explained this is not a comprehensive list and other cultural groups may use other venues that have not been picked up on this database.**

Sector	Number of Venues	Comments
Heritage	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elgin Museum is the only accredited museum in Moray however there is rich offering across Moray with huge potential as a visitor attraction.
Cultural	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector split into 4 sub sectors (3rd sector organisations, commercial business, community groups, sole traders). No evident connection between them and are driven by different purposes.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report states that sector is arguably more developed than the heritage sector in driving economic growth. This includes Dance North, M:ADE, Moray Arts Centre, and Hunted Cow and North Port Studios from a commercial perspective.
Arts	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key organisations include Elgin Town Hall for the Community, Moray Speyside, and the Village Hall Association.

The database also collated information on known Community Groups (understood to be primarily non funded and/or income generating). Of this the database has broken them down into the following sectors. **Please note, as above, this is not a comprehensive total as due to the nature of the sector it is extremely difficult to have a fixed list at any particular moment of time.**

- **Theatre** – 4
- **Music** – 16
- **Dance** – 9
- **Heritage** – 5

NPF4 requires local development plans to recognise and support opportunities for jobs and investment in the creative sector, culture, heritage, and the arts. The significant amount of work that has been undertaken as part of the wider Cultural Quarter project has provided an evidence base for beginning to understand what the cultural offering is like in Moray. The work that has been undertaken allows to be understood spatially which can feed into next MLDP to ensure it supports these industries. Having this spatial understanding of where venues and groups are operating could help to encourage strategic thinking about how these sectors operate as well as highlighting gaps in provision.

Forres Conservation and Heritage Scheme

Early work has begun on the Forres Conservation and Heritage scheme. The project seeks to explore ways to develop, promote and conserve the historic character of the Forres conservation area to boost the local economy. The delivery phase is currently under way which will run until September 2024. If successful, the subsequent Delivery Phase will provide funding over a 5-year period which will not only bring physical improvements to the built heritage but also, improve the local economy by increasing visitors and footfall, promoting traditional skills, and providing more opportunities for social interaction and community cohesion. This work will feed into the next LDP as well as potentially providing the opportunity to align with delivering projects within the Forres Town Centre Improvement Plan (TCIP).

Local Place Plans and further engagement on the LDP 2027

Through further LDP engagement and LPP’s community groups will be able to identify spaces and/or buildings which are used for cultural and creative purposes which perhaps are not readily known. For example, there may be cultural events that are specific to particular settlements or areas. This potentially would allow these gaps to be filled and could feed in the LDP process allowing these venues/spaces to be formally recognised and protected. Another call for ideas will likely be held which will allow the opportunity for sites/spaces to be considered as part of the next LDP.

Moray Economic Strategy 2022

Moray Community Planning Partnership updated the Moray Economic Strategy in 2022 taking into consideration the impacts on Moray from the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit, the cost-of-living crisis, and the Climate Emergency. It is a 10-year strategy based around the vision of Moray being “A distinctive and attractive place to live, work, operate a business or social enterprise, study and visit” and contains high level actions to achieve this. The strategy acknowledges the importance of the MGD and the

Cultural Quarter Project to support cultural expansion and economic growth in Elgin and beyond. The strategy recognises the opportunity for social enterprises to benefit from development support through the Business Enterprise Hub, and through the increase in cultural activity from the Cultural Quarter.

Tourism in Moray – The Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray

Improving the cultural offering in Moray provides a significant opportunity to improve the wider attraction of Moray as a tourism destination. The Strategy for Tourism Development in Moray sets out a vision in 2025 for Moray to “be known nationally and internationally as an exceptionally attractive destination for leisure and business visitors, offering memorable experiences, based on the area’s unique assets, including malt whisky, the heritage of Macbeth, its pure natural environment and superb food using local food.” The strategy recognises the importance of locally led initiatives through community-based organisations and how these must be supported. The strategy acknowledges that forming alliances with neighbouring organisations (whether informal or formal) will allow the sharing of resources, joint promotions, as well as strengthening Moray’s abilities to meet tourists needs. Evidence gathered through the LDP process regarding protecting and supporting cultural venues supports this wider strategy.

Elgin City Centre Masterplan & Moray Growth Deal

Cultural Quarter

The Elgin City Centre Masterplan (ECCM) was approved by Moray Council in January 2021. The Masterplan sets out a range of proposals including redevelopment opportunities, refurbishment of buildings, streetscape works, active travel connections, new facilities within Cooper Park and greening of the City Centre. Amongst the variety of projects identified within the ECCM were projects that would be funded by the Moray Growth Deal (MGD) which included the Cultural Quarter project.

The MGD is a significant package of investment of over £100 million for eight strategic projects and seeks to build on the existing strengths of Moray’s culture, tourism, and manufacturing sectors. The aim of these projects is to boost the economic competitiveness of the region which in turn will help to boost economic growth.

The Cultural Quarter is focused on the refurbishment of Grant Lodge as a high-quality heritage attraction, the extension and rebranding of Elgin Town Hall to create space for creative industries to thrive as well as improving the cultural offering available, and finally providing a high quality hotel.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Moray Council Senior Project Manager Cultural Quarter – Comments received have been included within the schedule.

Visit Moray Speyside

Moray Society – see statement of agreement below.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

- The new local development plan must consider the benefits that cultural events and attractions bring to Moray. This must be recognised as a key part of the wider tourism industry.
- Settlements statements to identify any known cultural venues/spaces and any which may be highlighted through the further LDP engagement.
- Work with local communities to identify long terms needs and requirements.

Statements of Agreement

Elgin Museum Volunteer and Trustee of the Moray Society

Notes the importance of Elgin Museum in terms of its contributions to Moray's Culture and Creativity and is the only accredited Museum in Moray. It was stated that the museum contributes to driving economic growth by providing within Moray and to an international audience through providing a key contribution to heritage and Moray's representation in the museum sector, in Scotland and beyond.

Moray Council agrees that the Elgin Museum is an important cultural and heritage asset particularly in terms of its location to Grant Lodge, the High Street, and the proposed Cultural Quarter. Its importance as being the only accredited Museum is acknowledged and referenced within the schedule as well as supporting documentation.

Statements of Dispute

None identified.

Issue: Topic / Place	18. Minerals
Information required by the Act regarding the issue addressed in this section	Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended, <u>Section 15(5)(a)</u> 'the principal physical, cultural, economic, social, built heritage and environmental characteristics of the district'
Links to Evidence	CD175 Collation of the results of the 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland (Sept 2023) CD045 Moray Planning Policy Guidance - MLDP
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Context	
The intention of the policy is to support the sustainable management of resources and minimise the impacts of the extraction of minerals on communities and the environment. Local Development Plans are required to provide at least a 10-year landbank of construction aggregates in relevant market areas.	
Summary of Evidence	
2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland and Moray Minerals Audit 2023	
<p>Moray forms part of the North East Scotland region for the purposes of the Scottish Aggregates Survey. In 2019, it was estimated that 482,000 tonnes of sand and gravel were extracted across the region. Of this, 396,000 tonnes were retained within the region. In Moray, there is a permitted minerals reserve of sand and gravel to September 2033. An application is currently under consideration for an extension of operating time for Fairyhills Quarry until 2034. However, consented supply levels drop considerably by 2031. Given the predicted drop in supply levels and permitted reserves expiring in 2033, there is scope for applications for new extraction or extensions to be in place to maintain healthy supplies.</p> <p>In respect of crushed (hard) rock, there are consents for extraction in place in Moray until 2064. Taking into account the 2019 Aggregates Survey, where 1.1 million tonnes of crushed rock was produced in the North East Scotland region and 19,000 tonnes imported, Moray's contribution is less than that of sand and gravel; however, based on the development rates and large scale development in this relatively small rural authority within the wider region, it is considered that this is sufficient to meet local demand and there is a landbank available in excess of 41 years.</p>	
Moray Planning Policy Guidance – MLDP	
To aide delivery or interpretation of MLDP policies in the local context, planning policy guidance was developed to guide developers and officers. Guidance on the restoration and aftercare of excavated mineral sites set out best practice to restoration design to ensure that these were designed and implemented to the highest standard, resulting in improvements to the cultural, recreational or environmental assets of the area.	
Summary of Stakeholder Engagement	
<p>The Moray Minerals Audit 2023 included engagement with operators of quarries within the Moray Council administrative boundary. 7 of the 9 local operators provided commercially sensitive information to inform the Audit.</p> <p>British Aggregates Association – No response received.</p>	
Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan	

- Proposed Plan to identify and safeguard the locations of important workable mineral resources which are of economic or conservation value.
- As an Insufficient landbank of permitted mineral reserves exists for sand and gravel, dialogue is ongoing with local operators to identify opportunities to increase consented reserves and secure a sufficient landbank beyond 2033.

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

None identified – no response received from stakeholder.

8. Site Checklists

The Council intends to use assessment checklists as part of its site appraisal process. The site assessment checklist circulated by the Improvement Service (IS) will be customised to reflect the evidence required to prepare the new LDP. This will include adding further detail on transport and human health. For example, criteria will be added to identify whether proposals are within the safeguarding distances of MOD bases and facilities. In addition to being completed by officers the site assessment will be circulated to statutory and technical consultees to add knowledge from their respective remits. Once all the information is gathered and collated including the scoring for SEA, it will allow officers to make a determination on the suitability of the site for inclusion in the new LDP.

Sites that may be deemed suitable for inclusion in the new LDP will be subject to further assessment to ensure that they are deliverable and effective. Landowners and developers will be required to complete the Effectiveness and Delivery Checklist and where this information is not forthcoming, sites will not be allocated.

It should be noted that changes may be made to the checklists in the future to ensure that they are fit for purpose and cover all pertinent issues.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: SITE ASSESSMENT AND SEA CHECKLIST

Site Name:	Source of site suggestion: All landowners/interested parties identified/aware?	Current site reference	Site History/Previous planning applications, existing local plan policies and proposals, historic reference numbers:
Settlement:	GIS Site Ref: Previous ref:	Outside settlement boundary?	
OS Grid Ref:	Site Size (ha):	Is the site an allocation in the adopted LDP; sites proposed through call for ideas or any other sites with potential? No Yes ref. Yes but different boundary	Summary Description (topography, features, boundaries, neighbouring issues, access, exposure, aspect etc. Site visit/GIS observations:
Current Use e.g. is the site brownfield, vacant and derelict land, greenfield, agricultural?	Proposed Use:	Relevant policies/proposals from LDP or NPF4:	
Insert Location Plan:		Insert Photographs if available:	

Topic – water Related SEA topics – population and human health, material assets, climatic factors	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Could the proposal affect the condition of the water environment (water quality, physical condition, water resources, and the migration of wild fish)? See RBMPs for further detail on water condition.	Flood risk and water management Coastal development Blue and green infrastructure					
Could the proposal have a direct impact on the water environment (for example, result in the need for watercourse crossings or a large-scale abstraction or allow the de-culverting of a watercourse)?	Flood risk and water management Coastal development Blue and green infrastructure					
Can the proposal connect to the public foul sewer?	Infrastructure first					
Can the proposal connect to the public water mains? If not, is there a sustainable water source that is resilient to the periods of water scarcity?	Flood risk and water management Infrastructure first					
Are there wetlands or boggy areas on the site?	Flood risk and water management					

<p>For large scale developments, are there any private or public water supplies within 250m of the site which may be affected?</p>	<p>Infrastructure first</p>					
<p>Flood Risk Relative to the floodplain, as defined in NPF4 could the proposal be at risk of flooding (from any source) or result in additional flood risk elsewhere? If flood risk is not fully understood, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) should be undertaken. Specify which of the following flood sources are applicable: fluvial, pluvial, sewer, groundwater or coastal.</p>	<p>Flood Risk and Water Management Coastal development</p>					
<p>Could the development of the site help alleviate any existing flooding problems in the area?</p>	<p>Flood risk and Water management</p>					

Topic – Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna Related SEA topics – soils, water, climatic factors...	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
To what extent will the proposal conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity?	Biodiversity Natural Places					
To what extent will the proposal facilitate the creation of nature networks and improve ecological connectivity?	Natural places Biodiversity					
International Designations - SAC/SPA, Ramsar, World Heritage Sites. To what extent will the proposal affect these sites including via connectivity?	Natural places Biodiversity					
National Designations To what extent will the proposal affect national designations – e.g. SSSI, NNR	Natural places biodiversity					
To what extent will the proposal affect other designations - and locally important designations such as LNRs.	Natural places Biodiversity					
To what extent will the proposal affect Non designated – e.g. trees, TPOs, hedges, woodland, (including woodlands in the Ancient , Semi Natural and Long Established Plantation Woodlands), species rich grasslands	Natural places Biodiversity					

Protected Species—e.g. bats, otters, etc - can it be ascertained if protected species will be affected and will a site survey be required?	Natural places Biodiversity					
To what extent will local geodiversity sites or wider geodiversity interests that could be affected by the proposal?	Soils Natural place Biodiversity					
How will habitat connectivity or wildlife corridors be affected by the proposal – will it result in habitat fragmentation or greater connectivity?	Biodiversity Tackling the climate and nature crisis Forestry, trees and woodland.					

Topic – Climatic Factors Related SEA topics – population, human health, water, biodiversity, material assets, soils, air, cultural heritage, landscape	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
To what extent will the proposal involve sediment extraction/reclamation or changes in coastal processes that could result in coastal flooding?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Coastal development					
To what extent will the proposal promote and enable adaptation to climate change?	Climate mitigation and adaptation					
To what extent does the proposal use nature based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Infrastructure First Blue and Green infrastructure					
To what extent does the proposal maintain and enhance resilience of existing and planned grey and green infrastructure?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Infrastructure first Blue and Green infrastructure					
To what extent does the proposal have good proximity to services and good access to existing or proposed public transport and active travel network?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Infrastructure First.					

Topic – Air Quality Related SEA topics – climatic factors, soils, population and human health	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Could the proposal lead to Local Air Quality Management thresholds being breached in an existing Air Quality Management Area?	Climate mitigation and adaptation Health and Safety					
Could the proposal lead to the designation of a new Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	Health and safety					
Does the proposal introduce a new potentially significant air emission to the area (e.g. combined heat and power, an industrial process, large scale quarry etc.)?	Health and safety					
Will the proposal lead to a sensitive use being located close to a site with noise/odour issues or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA (e.g. new housing adjacent to a large manufacturing factory)	Health and safety					

Topic – population and human health Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Is the proposal within the vicinity of a major accident hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline?	Health and safety					
Will the proposal affect service infrastructure: Education capacity - Secondary School Catchment Area/ Primary school catchment area Health provision/GP capacity						
To what extent will the proposal affect the quality and quantity of open space and connectivity and accessibility to open space or result in a loss of open space?	Design, Quality and place local living and 20 min neighbourhoods Blue and green infrastructure Play, recreation and sport					
To what extent will the proposal affect core path links or other key access networks such as cycle paths, coastal paths and rights of way?	Sustainable Transport Design, quality and place Local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods Infrastructure first??					

Will the proposal have the opportunity to incorporate new or enhance existing blue and/or green infrastructure providing multiple benefits such as enhanced biodiversity, management of surface water?	Blue and Green infrastructure Infrastructure First					
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Topic – Soils Related SEA topics – landscape, cultural heritage, water, biodiversity, flora and fauna, material assets.	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Does the proposal make use of a brownfield site or contaminated and vacant and derelict land? If on brownfield, is the site naturalised?	Soils Brownfield, vacant and derelict land					
Are there any contaminated soils issues on the site and if so, will the option employ remedial actions to ensure the site is suitable for use (as defined in PAN 33)?	Soils					
Is the proposal on peat or carbon rich soils and could the development of the site lead to a loss of peat or carbon rich soils?	Soils Climate mitigation and adaptation					
Does the proposal result in the loss of prime agricultural land or land that is culturally or locally important for primary use as identified by the LDP?	Soils					

Topic – Landscape Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets, biodiversity, population and human health	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
National landscape designated sites To what extent will any designated sites be affected – including NSAs, Regional Scenic Areas, and local landscape designations?	Natural Places					
Regional and local landscape designated sites To what extent will any designated sites be affected – Regional Scenic Areas, and local landscape designations?	Natural Places					
Non designated landscape features and key landscape interests Does the proposal ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate it? Such as current settlement boundaries, existing townscape and character of surrounding area and its visual qualities?	Natural Places					
To what extent will the proposal affect features of landscape interest, including the distinctive character of the landscape	Natural places					

Topic – Landscape Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets, biodiversity, population and human health	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
National landscape designated sites To what extent will any designated sites be affected – including NSAs, Regional Scenic Areas, and local landscape designations?	Natural Places					
Regional and local landscape designated sites To what extent will any designated sites be affected – Regional Scenic Areas, and local landscape designations?	Natural Places					
Non designated landscape features and key landscape interests Does the proposal ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the landscape to accommodate it? Such as current settlement boundaries, existing townscape and character of surrounding area and its visual qualities?	Natural Places					
and the qualities of wild land?						

Topic – Cultural Heritage Related SEA topics – Climatic factors, air, water, soils, material assets, biodiversity, landscape	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre- mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post- mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Does the proposal protect or enhance the site or setting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Heritage Sites* • Scheduled Monuments • Listed buildings • Inventory battlefields • Inventory gardens and designed landscapes • Conservation Areas • Undesignated historic environment assets • Streetscapes and settlement patterns monuments 	Historic assets and places Natural Places					

<p>Does the proposal promote or enable the retention, maintenance and sustainable use or re-use of historic buildings and infrastructure?</p>	<p>Historic assets and places</p> <p>Zero waste</p> <p>Infrastructure first</p> <p>Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings</p> <p>City, town, local and commercial centres</p> <p>Rural development</p>					
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<p>Does the proposal:</p> <p>Support the repair and appropriate retrofit of historic buildings?</p> <p>Support the transition to green energy supply in historic buildings?</p> <p>Include adaptation measures to make the historic environment assets and places more resilient to the effects of climate change (e.g. coastal erosion, flooding etc)?</p>	<p>Historic assets and places</p> <p>Tackling the climate and nature crises</p> <p>Climate mitigation and adaptation</p> <p>Design, quality and place</p> <p>Infrastructure first</p> <p>Quality homes</p> <p>Flood risk and water management</p> <p>Rural homes</p>					
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<p>Does the proposal:</p> <p>Enable the historic environment to support creation of high-quality places and spaces?</p> <p>Promote sustainable, responsible tourism, recreation and cultural activity?</p>	<p>Tourism</p> <p>Culture and creativity</p> <p>Design, quality and place</p> <p>Play, recreation and sport</p> <p>Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods</p>					
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Topic – Material Assets – Deliverability/ sustainability constraints Related SEA topics – climatic factors, air, water, soils, population and human health.	NPF4 Policy Topic	Scoring pre-mitigation	Mitigation	Enhancement	Scoring post-mitigation	Comments/conclusions
Will the site be delivered within the LDP timeframe? Other site servicing constraints, e.g. electricity pylons, underground gas pipelines etc.						
Site aspect – does the site make best use of solar gain? Is the site protected from prevailing winds?	Design Quality and place Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Heat and Cooling					
Is the site in an area of heat network potential or a designated Heat Network Zone (HNZ)?	Climate Mitigation and adaptation Heat and cooling					
Vehicular Access constraints or opportunities - Is the network capable of accommodating active travel, public transport, other shared modes, and private vehicle traffic generated?	local living and 20 min neighbourhoods Sustainable transport					

Is the site close to a range of facilities? Can these be accessed by public transport or active travel?	local living and 20 min neighbourhoods Sustainable transport City, town, local and commercial centres					
Does the proposal minimise demand for primary resources by reusing an existing building?	Zero waste					
For waste infrastructure and facilities (except landfill and EFW) does the proposal comply with the criteria listed in NPF4 policy 12 d)?	Zero waste					

Other Considerations

Please note any other issues which may be relevant to the assessment of the candidate site. For example:

- Any restrictive covenants relating to the use of the land/ buildings contained within the proposed candidate site?
- Is the candidate site on Common Good Land?
- Is there a requirement to prepare place-based development briefs or masterplans?

Scoring – two columns have been added in the event that it is useful for planning authorities to quickly identify environmental effects from a proposal on a site. Where adverse effects have been identified, it may then also be useful to consider any obvious mitigation measures that might reduce these adverse effects. The second scoring column then allows at a quick glance to see what residual effects might remain following mitigation. There are many scoring techniques currently in use and an example of one option could be:

++	+	0	-	--
Significantly positive	positive	neutral	adverse	Significantly adverse

Explanation of the key SEA topics (please note the SEA objectives are suggested examples only)

Water

SEA objective – To protect and enhance the ecological status of the water environment

Water Drainage Constraints

The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) has the overall objective of ensuring that all inland and coastal waters within defined river basin districts reach at least good status by 2027. Achieving this requires measures to be put in place and action to be taken to i) prevent deterioration and ii) promote improvements in the water environment.

Information on the current status of a water body, pressures affecting it, measures required to address those pressures, and deadlines for achieving those measures can be extracted from SEPA's [water environment hub](#). This tool should be used to identify existing pressures on water bodies and the site assessment should identify whether or not policies and proposals are likely to exacerbate existing pressures, create new problems and offer opportunities for enhancement. For example, if there are already morphological pressures on a water body then further engineering could trigger a further downgrade. Control of non-native invasive bank-side / in-stream plant species is an example of enhancement where an invasive non-native species pressure has been identified for a water body.

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Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs)

GWDTEs are types of wetland which are specifically protected under the Water Framework Directive. SEPA holds a list of GWDTEs within all designated sites (SSSIs, SPAs, and SACs). To identify non-designated GWDTEs a habitat survey (Phase 1) would be required. At the site assessment stage we do not require a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, but we do require information on location of wetlands and boggy areas. This information can be collected by looking for the boggy ground symbol on GIS and / or a site visit.

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Flood Risk

Development plan preparation should be informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). [Scottish Government's Development Planning Guidance](#) states that SFRAs are designed to inform the development planning process, primarily to avoid increasing overall flood risk by avoiding areas of flood hazard. The SFRA can be used as a screening tool to identify whether flood risk is fully understood at site assessment stage, and therefore whether further detailed site-level [Flood Risk Assessment](#) is required prior to a site being included in the Proposed Plan, to ensure that only sites that are in accordance with NPF4 are allocated SEPA has produced Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Guidance which explains how this assessment can be carried out.

For SEA purposes if flood risk is found to be an issue, mitigation could be the removal of the site (or part thereof found to be at risk) from allocation.

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[SEA guidance on water](#) provides advice on how to take water into account in SEA.

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

SEA objective – Protect and enhance designated wildlife sites, wider biodiversity interests, valuable habitats and protected species, avoiding irreversible losses

International Designations

If there is a likely significant effect then it is important to state why and what site may be affected (including Ramsar sites). The information gathered for this Site Assessment will help inform the 'screening' stage of the HRA – i.e. identify likely significant effects on a Natura site. **Policies or proposals likely to affect a Natura site should be flagged up for assessment in terms of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal.** Guidance on where designated sites are and what their qualifying interests relate to can be found on NatureScot's website Sitelink - <https://sitelink.nature.scot/home>. In addition, the majority of Natura sites are underpinned by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs all have a site management statement which provides useful information on site condition and management pressures and will help to establish what is important and why and therefore help identify likely significant effects.

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National designated sites

Again, see the above comments regarding site management statements for Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are examples of the best wildlife sites in Scotland. These are managed for wildlife but also allowing for enjoyment by public. Guidance on NNRs can be found at: www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/national-designations/national-nature-reserves

Other Designated Sites

Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are locally important for natural heritage, designated and managed by local authorities to give people better opportunities to learn about and enjoy nature close to where they live. Similarly Local Nature Conservation Areas flag-up to planners and developers where there are natural feature of some merit. In this way it gives planners and developers early indication of sensitive sites and opportunities for enhancing the local environment. The local Biodiversity Officer should be able to provide advice here.

Non designated features and key wildlife habitats

- trees and woodland, including ancient and semi- natural inventory sites
- species rich grassland, moorland, heathland, wetlands and watercourses including burns

Links to Ancient Woodland Inventory (within SNHi) and the Forestry Commission's Native Woodland Survey of Scotland are detailed below.

www.nature.scot/doc/guide-understanding-scottish-ancient-woodland-inventory-awi

<http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/supporting/strategy-policy-guidance/native-woodland-survey-of-scotland-nwss>

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Protected Species

Although protected areas can safeguard species within their boundaries, some animals and plants are so threatened or vulnerable that they need legal protection wherever they occur. For further information on Protected species click [here](#).

Local Geodiversity sites

These sites provide examples of geology and geomorphology of regional and local importance, where the geodiversity resource can be conserved, so that people can enjoy and find out more about it. These sites can contribute to the quality of local environments and provide opportunities for recreation and informal education.

Geological Conservation Review sites come from an assessment of nationally and internationally important sites for geology and geomorphology. The site boundaries for these and un-notified GCR sites are available through SNHi: www.nature.scot/professional-advice/protected-areas-and-species/protected-areas/local-designations/geological-conservation-review-sites

Local geodiversity sites are selected by voluntary geoconservation bodies such as local Geodiversity groups and Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) groups. Geology and other natural history enthusiasts, wildlife trusts, museums, geological societies, teachers, planners and site owner, participate in the running of RIGS groups. [More information on RIGS](#).

Nature Networks

A Nature Network connects nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones. As well as supporting regional and national approaches to protect and restore nature, they provide local benefits to wildlife and people.

Connectivity is an essential part of nature. It is necessary for functioning and healthy ecosystems, key for the survival of animal and plant species, and is crucial to ensuring genetic diversity and adaptation to pressures such as climate change.

To ensure Scotland's nature can thrive, nature-rich areas must be connected through a series of networks linking them all together.

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Air Quality

SEA objective – To improve or avoid adverse impacts to air quality and reduce emissions of key pollutants.

The impact of allocations on local Air Quality Management thresholds should be considered. For example, where an area is already close to exceeding air quality objectives, where an area is at risk of becoming an AQMA, or where sensitive development such as a hospital or residential use is proposed close to a busy road or a site regulated for emissions to air by SEPA. Such allocations may lead to an increase in the exposure of people to poor air quality.

[SEA guidance on air](#) provides advice on how to take air into account in SEA.

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Population and Human Health

SEA Objective – To protect and enhance quality of life including maintaining and improving opportunities to access public open space and the natural and historic environment

Our surroundings are a key factor in determining our health and sense of well-being. Development plans set the context for clear development management decisions which will help deliver high quality green networks and protect and enhance natural heritage assets. [Green Networks in Development Planning](#) explains the background to green networks, their multi-functionality and provides development planning advice in respect of green networks. Planning authorities should also seek to prevent further fragmentation or isolation of habitats and identify opportunities to restore links which have been broken; [Integrated Habitat Networks](#) can be used here alongside green networks to ensure local biodiversity is maintained and enhanced

Human health can be affected by environmental factors which include pollution (e.g. emissions to air, soil or water from industrial processes including energy and waste management), flooding and climate change. Consideration of these issues, particularly in relation to location of sensitive development types, in site assessment will help to ensure that human health and wellbeing are integral to the plan.

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Soil

SEA objective – To maintain or improve soil quality, quantity and function and prevent any further degradation of soils
To protect carbon rich soils and restore peatlands

Soils provide the following seven key functions:

- providing the basis for food and biomass production
- controlling and regulating environmental interactions (regulating water flow & quality)
- storing carbon and maintaining the balance of gases in the air
- providing valued habitats and sustaining biodiversity
- providing a platform for buildings and roads
- providing raw material
- preserving cultural and archaeological heritage

The assessment should consider the impacts of development on the relevant soil functions for the site. SEPA provides information on regulations that apply to soil and good practice guidance which is available at www.sepa.org.uk/environment/land/soil.

The [Scottish Soil Framework](#) provides a general framework to promote the sustainable, management and protection of soil consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs of Scotland. [SEA guidance on soil](#) provides advice on how to take soil into account in SEA.

The [James Hutton Institute](#) (formerly Macaulay) provides information on soil maps which are available from [Scotland's Soils website](#).

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Landscape

SEA objective – conserve and enhance landscape character and scenic value of the area and protect and enhance designated landscape areas

Designated Landscapes

Our fine scenery provides an inspiring backdrop for all who live in Scotland. Images of our unspoilt landscape also helps to market our [tourism](#) and film industries and world-renowned products such as whisky.

Our finest landscapes have been designated as either [National Scenic Areas](#) or [National Parks](#). These include some of Scotland’s most famous areas, from the Cuillin Hills to the Cairngorms.

Non-Designated Landscapes

High quality landscapes encourage us to venture into the outdoors. Having [greenspace](#) in our towns and cities, and easy access to our surrounding landscapes, brings vital benefits to our health and well-being.

Each part of Scotland has a distinctive character, which helps to build our sense of place – both in our own localities and as a nation. Together, our diverse landscapes and townscapes provide a living canvas of Scotland’s history, reflecting ways of life and traditions deeply engrained in our culture. Some landscapes are valued for their [wild land](#) quality.

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Climatic Factors – Climate Change Mitigation

SEA objective – To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase resilience to the consequences of climate change

The Scottish Government’s guidance [Consideration of Climatic Factors within Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\)](#) provides useful guidance on how to determine whether a PPS is likely to have significant environmental effects.

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Material Assets – Waste

SEA objective – To reduce waste and promote the sustainable use of resources

The Scottish Government’s [Zero Waste Plan](#) sets out a vision of a zero waste Scotland where waste is treated as a valuable resource and not as a burden.

For allocations for the location of waste management facilities consideration should be given to the potential for adverse impacts which may arise from locating other new development in the vicinity of proposed / existing waste sites and on the potential risk the proposal would pose to people or property. The local authority Environmental Health department is best placed to advise on site specific considerations.

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Cultural Heritage (including the historic environment)

SEA Objective – To protect and promote the historic environment

SEA Sub Objectives:

- To protect and enhance historic environment assets and their settings
- To promote and enable the retention of historic environment assets
- To make the historic environment more climate resilient and to reduce emissions from the historic environment
- To promote and enable access, understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment

Settlement level:

Consideration should be given to the likely implications and opportunities for the historic environment arising from the spatial strategy. This will involve considering the likely significant effects for historic environment assets (and their settings), and places.

Strategic considerations:

Our historic environment is not only a finite resource that requires protection but one that also delivers the places and spaces that are key to our everyday lives, cultural identity and sense of place. Our historic built environment provides us with much of our housing stock, offices, infrastructure, public buildings and parks and gardens and therefore our use, maintenance and adaption of these assets is key to a sustainable future and our health and wellbeing.

Scotland's new strategy for the historic environment [Our Past, Our Future \(OPOF\)](#) was published in April 2023. The strategy sets the direction of travel for the historic environment sector and identifies the priority areas of action to focus work to support this mission. The 3 priorities are *Delivering the transition to net zero*, *Empowering resilient and inclusive communities and places* and *Building a wellbeing economy*. The importance of the contribution that the maintenance, reuse and adaptation of our historic environment can make in preventing waste and reducing carbon emissions is recognised under the transition to net zero priority.

Scotland's current landscape is the product of natural processes and human activity operating over many centuries, and both natural and historic aspects should be considered when developing policies and proposals at the landscape scale. Proposals should protect and promote the overarching importance of the historic environment to a sense of place. They should take account of the capacity of settlements and surrounding areas to accommodate development without damage to their cultural and historic significance. This reflects the policies contained within both the [National Planning Framework](#) and [The Historic Environment Policy for Scotland](#) (HEPS). HEPS is a policy statement for decision making for the whole of the historic environment for use at all levels. All the policies and principles in HEPS are likely to be relevant to strategic decisions around the allocation of land depending on context, with HEP2, HEP4 and HEP5 highlighting the importance of sustainable decision making and planning for the future use of historic assets and places.

[Historic Environment Scotland's Portal](#) holds locational information on national designations (including downloadable datasets) including designation records, scheduled monument consents and decisions. The relevant council area Historic Environment Records will also be a key resource for information on historic environment baseline including for non-designated assets.

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Moray Local Development Plan 2027

Effectiveness Checklist for Development Sites

Site Details		
Name of the site		
Site address		
OS grid reference		
Site size (in hectares)		
Current land use		
Neighbouring land uses(s)		
Designated in MLDP 2020?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, please specify:	
Land type	Previously Developed <input type="checkbox"/>	Greenfield <input type="checkbox"/>
Include an Ordnance Survey plan (1:1250, 1:2,500 or 1:5000). The site boundary should be outlined in red and show proposed points of access etc.		

Your Details	
Name	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Address	
Telephone/Mobile number	
Email address	

Ownership		
Are you	Sole Owner <input type="checkbox"/>	Part Owner <input type="checkbox"/>
	Agent <input type="checkbox"/>	Developer <input type="checkbox"/>
	Register Social Landlord <input type="checkbox"/>	Option to Purchase <input type="checkbox"/>
	No Legal Interest <input type="checkbox"/>	
If not sole owner, state owner(s) and provide contact details		
Do these owners know this site is being proposed for development	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If 'Option to Purchase', please provide details (timescale, area of site etc.)		
Are there any legal factors which may prevent, or restrict, development? (e.g. wayleaves, restriction on land use, rights of way, ransom strips, access issues, visibility splay ownership etc.)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, please specify:	

Indicative Proposal		
Brief description of proposed use		
If residential, what number of units is proposed?		
If other uses, what is the proposed site area (ha) or floorspace (sq. m)?	Business and offices	
	General industrial	
	Storage and distribution	
	Retail	
	Other (please specify)	

Delivery			
What year do you expect development to start?			
Projected delivery timeframe from LDP adoption in 2027	Short <input type="checkbox"/> (2027-2030)	Medium <input type="checkbox"/> (2031-2033)	Long <input type="checkbox"/> (2034-2037)
Indicative residential completions per year	Y1 -	Y2 -	Y3 -
	Y4 -	Y5 -	Y6 -
	Y7 -	Y8 -	Y9 -

	Y10 -	Y11>	
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Planning History		
Any previous planning history or consents in the last 10 years?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, please specify:	
Has contact been made with the Planning Authority in relation to the proposal?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, please specify:	

Potential Constraints			
Is the site affected by any physical constraints (e.g. substations, pylons, underground cables, rivers/burns etc.)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, please specify:		
Is any part of the site at risk from flooding?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, have any assessments been carried out:		
Is the site subject to any potential contamination issues?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, have any assessments been carried out:		
Is the site affected by any other potential constraints (e.g. service or access connections)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, please specify:		

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information provided in this checklist will be treated as confidential due to its commercial sensitivity and will be used by Moray Council solely for the purposes of site assessment in relation to the preparation of the Moray Local Development Plan 2027.