



Moray Council

Wednesday, 22 May 2024

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Meeting of the **Moray Council** is to be held at **Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX** on **Wednesday, 22 May 2024** at **09:30**.

BUSINESS

1. **Sederunt**
2. **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests ***
3. **Resolution**

Consider, and if so decide, adopt the following resolution:
"That under Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Items 10 and 11 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act."

4. **Minutes**
 - 4a. **Minutes of Special Moray Council on 28 February 2024** 7 - 18
 - 4b. **Minutes of Meeting of Moray Council on 6 March 2024** 19 - 30
 - 4c. **Minutes of Special Moray Council on 27 March 2024** 31 - 36
 - 4d. **Minutes of Special Moray Council on 24 April 2024** 37 - 44
5. **Written Questions ****
6. **Moray Integration Joint Board Summary Report** 45 - 58
Report by Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray

7. **Recruitment and Selection Process for a Chief Social Work Officer** 59 - 62
Report by Interim Chief Executive and Chief Executive
8. **Learning Estate Programme Update - Future Forres Academy Site Selection** 63 - 184
Report by Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development)
9. **Information Reports - if called in Item(s) which the Council may wish to consider with the Press and Public excluded**
10. **Land Assembly - Moray Growth Deal [Para 9]**
- 9. Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority;
11. **Refugee Resettlement and Assylum Activities [Para 3 and 5]**
- 3. Information relating to any particular applicant for, or recipient or former recipient of, any service provided by the Authority;
 - 5. Information relating to the adoption, care, fostering or education of any particular child or relating to the supervision or residence of any particular child in accordance with a supervision requirement;

Information Reports - Not for Discussion at this Meeting

Any member wishing to call in a noting or information report from one meeting shall give notice to Committee Services at least 48 hours before the meeting for which the report is published. The Notice shall be countersigned by one other elected member and shall explain the reason for call in including any action sought.

Information Report - Moray Growth Deal Annual Report

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

185 -
250

Watching the Meeting

You can watch the webcast live by going to:

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_43661.html

Webcasts are available to view for 1 year following the meeting.

You can also attend the meeting in person, if you wish to do so, please come to the High Street entrance door and a member of staff will be let into the building.

GUIDANCE NOTES

- * **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests** - The Chair of the meeting shall seek declarations from any individual or political group at the beginning of a meeting whether any prior decision has been reached on how the individual or members of the group will vote on any item(s) of business on the Agenda, and if so on which item(s). A prior decision shall be one that the individual or the group deems to be mandatory on the individual or the group members such that the individual or the group members will be subject to sanctions should they not vote in accordance with the prior decision. Any such prior decisions will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.

- ** **Written Questions** - Any Member can put one written question about any relevant and competent business within the specified remits not already on the agenda, to the Chair provided it is received by the Proper Officer or Committee Services by 12 noon two working days prior to the day of the meeting. A copy of any written answer provided by the Chair will be tabled at the start of the relevant section of the meeting. The Member who has put the question may, after the answer has been given, ask one supplementary question directly related to the subject matter, but no discussion will be allowed.

No supplementary question can be put or answered more than 10 minutes after the Council has started on the relevant item of business, except with the consent of the Chair. If a Member does not have the opportunity to put a supplementary question because no time remains, then he or she can submit it in writing to the Proper Officer who will arrange for a written answer to be provided within 7 working days.

MORAY COUNCIL

Moray Council

SEDERUNT

Councillor Kathleen Robertson (Chair)
Councillor Donald Gatt (Depute Chair)

Councillor James Allan (Member)
Councillor Peter Bloomfield (Member)
Councillor Neil Cameron (Member)
Councillor Tracy Colyer (Member)
Councillor Theresa Coull (Member)
Councillor John Cowe (Member)
Councillor John Divers (Member)
Councillor Amber Dunbar (Member)
Councillor Jérémie Fernandes (Member)
Councillor David Gordon (Member)
Councillor Juli Harris (Member)
Councillor Sandy Keith (Member)
Councillor Scott Lawrence (Member)
Councillor Graham Leadbitter (Member)
Councillor Marc Macrae (Member)
Councillor Paul McBain (Member)
Councillor Neil McLennan (Member)
Councillor Shona Morrison (Member)
Councillor Bridget Mustard (Member)
Councillor Derek Ross (Member)
Councillor John Stuart (Member)
Councillor Draeyk van der Horn (Member)
Councillor Sonya Warren (Member)
Councillor Ben Williams (Member)

Clerk Name:	Tracey Sutherland
Clerk Telephone:	07971 879268
Clerk Email:	committee.services@moray.gov.uk

Minute of Special Meeting of the Moray Council

Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor David Gordon, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Neil McLennan, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor John Stuart, Councillor Draeyk van der Horn, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

Councillor Neil Cameron

IN ATTENDANCE

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Housing and Property, Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Head of Environmental and Commercial Services and Democratic Services Manager.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Kathleen Robertson.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests

In terms of Standing Orders 21 and 23 and The Councillors' Code of conduct the Council noted the following declarations and group interest in respect of the 2024/25 Budget from the Conservative, SNP, Labour and Green Councillors.

For transparency Councillor Williams declared a connection in terms of Item 6 on the agenda, however following advice from the Monitoring Officer, advised he would remain in the meeting.

There were no other declarations for Group Leaders or Spokesperson in regard to any prior decisions taken on how members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

3. Resolution

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives

be excluded from the meeting for Items 17 - 19 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class.

Para number of the minute	Para Number of Schedule 7a
6	Para 1 Information in relation to staffing matters

4. Corporate Plan Progress Update 2022-2023

The Chair advised that consideration of this item and item 4a Corporate Plan would be considered together.

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informing Council of progress made during 2022-23 on the 2019-24 Corporate Plan.

Following consideration, the Council noted the progress made during 2022-23 on the Corporate Plan 2019-24 as set out in Appendix 1.

5. Corporate Plan

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asking the Council to note the outcome of the engagement activity on the draft high level priorities for the Council Corporate Plan for 2024 to 2029 and to agree Council's Corporate plan 2024-29 setting out the priorities and high level actions.

Prior to the meeting, Councillors were provided with proposed amendments to the Corporate Plan from Councillor van der Horn.

The Chair confirmed that authority had been given to herself and the Chief Executive at the meeting of Moray Council on 23 August 2023 to agree any amendments to the wording of the plan and confirmed that she was happy to accept the proposed changes to the updated version of the corrected plan as follows:

Page 2 - Community should read Community and Environment

Page 3 - additional bullet point should read - effects of climate change on our environment and communities.

Page 7 - change Council adapts to the changing climate and acts sustainably to read Council adapts and acts to the impacts of climate change.

Councillor Morrison stated that she was happy to see the inclusion of the Gender Pay Gap being included and sought clarification on whether it should be included as part of the challenges being faced under the Tackle Poverty and Inequality Priority to ensure that the Council continue to raise the profile of a significant issue in Moray.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance confirmed that it was within the gift of the Councillors decision at the meeting and would include a paragraph under challenges on the Gender Pay Gap as it is set in the context for the plan and Officers will work on an outcome indicator to allow regular reporting on the challenge.

Following further consideration the Council unanimously agreed, subject to the amendments previously discussed, to:

- i) review the outcome of the outcome of the public consultation on the draft 2024-29 Corporate Plan priorities;
- ii) the Council's Corporate Plan 2024-29 as set out in Appendix 1 and the approach to delivery and performance management through service and strategic plans;
- iii) note that a final version of the Corporate Plan 2024-29 will be published online;
- iv) recognise the potential for an integrated single Moray plan to deliver a shared ambition with Community Planning Partners and agrees to enter into discussions with Community Planning Partners to explore this as a future option.

6. Short to Medium Term Financial Planning [Para 1]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking Council to approve proposed savings, subject to consultation where appropriate, for implementation in 2024/25 and 2025/26, in accordance with the Council's Short to Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) to note the savings options set out in Appendix 1, having due regard to the Integrated Equalities Assessments linked to the appendix;
- ii) the greatest level of savings possible, subject to Stage 2 public communications as indicated in Appendix 1 and/or workforce consultation as required; and
- iii) the proposed amendment to the Council's Change Management Policy and Procedures as set out in paragraph 6.7 of this report.

7. 2024-25 Budget 2024-27 Financial Plan

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking the Council to set the level of Council Tax for 2024/25, to agree the Council's revenue budget for 2024/25 and to consider the Council's Financial Plan for 2024 to 2027.

Councillor Robertson said that she was pleased and privileged to present her second budget as Leader of the Administration Group. Before going into the details of the budget, she thanked the Officers for their support in preparing the budgets. She thanked Mrs Gunn and Mrs Paisey, in particular, who had overall responsibility for preparing the budget. She further thanked Heads of Service who worked hard to provide detail against their budget areas. Additionally, she went on to thank the Elected Members who worked in line with the Budget Protocol and participated in Budget Development meetings. Lastly, she thanked Mr Burns who supported Members throughout this process to get to the current stage and in particular to

acknowledge his contribution to this and all previous years as this would be his last budget as Chief Executive.

Councillor Robertson was pleased to say that there had been a continued collegiate approach to the budget setting and financial processes. During the past year, both Elected Members and Officers had been engaged behind the scenes discussing budget savings options and transformation of services. These discussions were robust and productive as could be seen in the political agreement that has been reached in the majority of the budget savings and in the overall approach to balancing the Council's budget. She personally thanked Councillors Leadbitter, Morrison, Keith and van der Horn for their insightful suggestions and beneficial discussions which she believed would enable all 26 Elected Members to agree the budget submitted for approval in 2024-25.

Councillor Robertson continued, overall the Council's settlement was for one year only, but the Council intended setting its 2024-25 budget in the context of longer term planning. It was recognised that continued reduction in real term funding seems inevitable given other Scottish Government commitment and generally downbeat forecasts of the Scottish Economy. It needed to be acknowledged that without significant increases in core funding the financial outlook for Scottish local authorities appears bleak.

The Council's revenue budget comprised of a mix of complex funding streams for new and existing burdens on the Council. The details are contained in the report. In particular, she highlighted a new burden which the Council is required to deliver against, and which is associated with the grant settlement. This burden was the extension of universal free school meals. Over the next year Officers will be keeping a close eye on spend against potential further burdens to ensure that spend is kept as much as possible within the funding allocation.

In relation to the Capital Plan, it was noted that the plan had been reviewed in light of increasing costs and changes in requirements. The fundamental objective of affordability supports our delivery of the capital plan. Continued discussion around our capital projects going forward will be needed over the coming year to ensure it remains within sustainable limits.

With the approval in the previous paper of the further savings from the 'greens and ambers', the Council have gone some way into addressing the budget deficit. Additionally, the Council must not forget that these savings are in addition to previous savings agreed this year of £7.5M.

Councillor Robertson highlighted some real successes over the past year including the redesign of the Additional Support Needs service which aimed to bring the budget back into line and gave a clear vision for the service. This would be the same with the ELC budget including the decision made by Council on the sustainable rate. In addition to these service changes, a new approach to setting Council charges and taxes to maximise the Council's income was reviewed and Council reviewed and introduced additional taxes such as the Council tax levy on second homes and fit life visitor membership which should bring in an estimated additional £2.2M. The Council must also not forget the additional funding Moray received to support economic growth by securing £18m from the Levelling Up Fund, £20m for Town Centre redevelopment and of course the ongoing Moray Growth Deal. All together Moray has secured £138m investment to develop Moray's economic infrastructure over the coming decade.

Councillor Robertson drew Member's attention to the budget pressures amounting to over £4m, plus the budget pressure to cover the Moray Integration Joint Board. These pressures require monitoring over the next year to ensure that the Council is managing its budget within limits including the active engagement with the Integration Joint Board to ensure that the overspend is brought back in line with budget allocations.

To be in keeping with the hierarchal approach to budget setting, the Council had already agreed in January to increases in charges, where appropriate.

Income from Council tax receipts is the other main source of income for the Council. While the recommendation is to accept the Council tax freeze it should be acknowledged that the promise of it being fully funded is not wholly correct. In fact, the Council is potentially £1M worse off as a result. Nonetheless it was felt to be in the best interests of Moray residents to not increase their financial burden at this time with a 10% increase in Council tax which would have been needed if the freeze was not accepted. Following the publication of the budget it was learnt that Councils would be given more revenue budget, but it will be dependent on outcomes of both the UK and Scottish budgets, so it was acknowledged that there were no guarantees.

The next stage in the hierarchal approach was spend to save. The renaming Council priority reserve as workforce planning allows the Council to not only ensure there is budget to cope with workforce policy, it will use some reserves to finance a management restructure with leadership development, with the intent that some savings will be harvested from the review.

Savings identified over the year were £3m. These savings had been agreed over the year in discussion with both Officers and Members. Robust discussions had created a unique approach to the budget setting in that, all major parties had come together to agree savings and areas of priority for the coming year such as supporting the communities with an increase in youth workers and community wardens. In addition through the cross-party agreement, there was consensus against reduction in essential services that support vulnerable people such as the funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau and an increase in the welfare fund of an additional £40k from the Council's budget to meet demand against the Scottish Government grant which is not sufficient to cover the needs from the Council's residents. Further Officers are looking towards our environment by reducing the amount of glyphosate used by the Council in grounds maintenance and a commitment to position some spend within the Just Transition fund towards climate change initiatives.

The use of the Covid reserves will assist the Council to balance its budget for 2024-25 in addition to the savings identified. While only minor savings from small scale transformation were envisaged for this year, Members were in agreement that in 2024-25 the Council will focus on investing in transforming and innovation of service delivery and meet the objective of linking the medium to long term financial strategy by 2025-26. To do this Members recognise that the Council must clearly identify the use of funds to enable transformation and innovation of services to take place.

Reviewing the other reserves which the Council has it had been agreed to reallocate some of these reserves to support transformation and innovation by adding £1.5m to the transformation reserves. Further the Council's focus will be on undertaking a management restructure to ensure the Council is focusing on its priorities by reviewing staffing and capacity and supporting leadership development by allocating of £3.1m to workforce planning which will include expenditure on enacting workforce policy. Lastly, the Council are determined that members, collectively, will create a

sustainable Council and to ensure this an additional £1m from earmarked reserves will be transferred into the general reserves to provide the Council with a cushion should any emergency arise. This will put the Council on a path of transformation, innovation and sustainability.

Unfortunately, the savings and reserves used to balance the budget for 2024-25 do not preclude the need for more savings to be made in 2025-26. Councillor Robertson confirmed that she will be working hard over the year with her fellow members and officers to transform the approach to budget savings through exploring innovative approaches to services which not only balance the budget but delivers better services to Moray's communities. As has been shown in the past year, the collegiate approach to setting this budget will ensure that all voices are heard in the chamber and throughout the organisation.

With the collegiate approach in mind, Councillor Robertson confirmed that she was pleased to recommend the budget to Council subject to the changes intimated which included updates provided by the Chief Financial Officer to Items 5 and 6, and with particular pleasure, subject to adjustments to the budget proposals as set out in the Cross Party Proposals, the net effect of which was to produce a total core budget increase of £330k against a core budget decrease of £399k, with additional spend from the Transformation Reserve of £30k as set out in the explanatory note which had been circulated to members earlier and detailed below:

Notification of two updates to Item 6 report as printed by the report author:

- Amend service description in **Appendix 4** to item 6 and Appendix 1 to item 5 for savings number 2 and 3 to Development Management and Building Standards respectively
- In **Appendix 3** to item 6, add at the foot of the section headed "Options to Bridge the Gap" the following: "SG additional funding (conditional on Council Tax Freeze and UK Government Spring Budget) - £1m with total shown as £3.5m"

Separately, notification on behalf of the Administration Group:

Cross Party Budget Proposals (Conservative, SNP, Labour and Green) recommendations as set out in Item 6, amended as follows:

- Adopt the proposals in the amendment in full, subject to the budget equivalent to 8 x Detached Youth Workers being phased as follows: half the budget released immediately with the remaining budget to be released in 2024/25 when the initial impact of the first £100k investment has been reviewed and based on a targeted approach to remaining gaps in youth work agreed by Council.
- Proposal of the following additional savings:
 - A saving of £33k from 2024/25 from saving number 10 in Appendix 4 of Item 6
 - A saving of £48k from 2024/25 from saving number 11 in Appendix 4 of Item 6
 - A saving from 2024/25 of £8k from reduction in the use of glyphosate, working towards a 100% reduction by the end of 2025 as required by the currently anticipated date from which use will be banned

- Additional funding of £40k to the Scottish Welfare Fund for 2024/25
- Additional funding of £30k for creation of a Plan for Just Transition for Moray to support a bid to the North East Just Transition fund for the remaining duration of that fund, from the Transformation Reserve

The amendments meant that recommendation 2.1 (iii) is amended to read:

Budgeted expenditure of £278,794,000 for 2024/25

and Recommendation 2.1 (vii) is amended to read:

Use of ear-marked reserves totalling £731,000 for transformation, £1,136,000 for Moray Growth Deal cash flow and of £10,156,000 from covid reserves to balance the budget.

Councillor Robertson therefore confirmed that she was delighted to recommend the budget to Council and moved the recommendations as amended. This was seconded by Councillor Gatt.

In response to the Leader's budget speech Councillor Leadbitter stated that the SNP Group recognised that the pragmatic and negotiative approach to the budget has been a significant and positive change. The SNP Group willingly engaged in the process with all parties; committing time and energy to find areas of co-operation and mutual agreement. There had been similar experiences of minority administration and it behoved everyone to find a way forward for the benefit of communities across Moray when the democratic process leaves the political balance in the Council somewhat tricky. Whilst there had not been agreement on all areas, red lines from different groups, including the SNP's red lines, had been respected and it was recognised that it was a more positive approach to budget setting.

He also advised that groups had been able to have conversations and explore ideas and alternative options, which we welcome. Notwithstanding the cross-party work that has happened in Moray, it cannot go unstated that the financial pressures on public services in Scotland are largely caused by years of austerity budgets by the UK Conservative Government. Whilst supporting putting more money in the pockets of people who are least well off, the continued tax cuts to higher earners by the UK Government at the expense of the NHS, Social Care, Education, Transport, Policing and many other public service budgets.

He said that not only did the Council find itself in Scotland trying to make money go further every year, the Council are also having to mitigate the impacts of a Cost of Living crisis and inflation and energy prices that have outstripped most other western countries.

In achieving that consensus Councillor Leadbitter took a great deal of positivity from the fact that the SNP's amendment had been accepted in full and, likewise, had been able to support some additional asks of the Administration, of the Labour Party and of the Green Party.

There are currently 2 permanent Community Wardens in Moray and the SNP sought to double that to 4 and got further agreement for investment in budget equivalent to an additional 8 Youth Workers.

These proposals were consistent with the amendment last year and while it was not supported at that time, the Group are pleased to have achieved that support this time round.

He confirmed that he firmly believed that these investments combined will both supporting young people in a range of different ways, whilst also supporting actions would help to address an increase in anti-social behaviour - both in residential settings and in the wider community.

Councillor Leadbitter added that the Group very much welcomed the decision to freeze Council Tax, which was fully funded and baselined for next year's budget. His understanding was that additional funds released to Councils, combined with the baselining will now mean that the Council's budget gap for the next 2 years is likely to be less than £8million subject to expected additional education funding with less call on reserves.

He said that the SNP Group are committed to continue with working cross-party on a range of issues but will of course continue to highlight the pressure being created by the UK Government's continuing squeeze on public finances at the expense of valued public services.

As Labour Group Leader Councillor Keith wished to say a few comments about the proposed budget, local government in general and the context within which the Council operate.

He stated that in the meeting held on 1 March, 2023, local government is a force for good and that the Council deliver many vital services such as roads, schools and libraries which are valued by Moravians. The Labour Group put up an amendment last year which was accepted by the majority of councillors establishing ward budgets, making a £20,000 donation to the Moray Foodbank and extra money going into Road Safety Schemes amongst other worthwhile initiatives.

He said that for the current year the Labour Group put forward the case for three extra Community Wardens to address anti-social behaviour in the towns and villages and it is hoped that the extra 2 agreed as part of the all-party agreement would also be able to extend their focus onto traffic related matters.

The party have also secured £40,000 to augment the Welfare Fund. Members received a report last month where Councillors learnt that the Council would only be providing assistance to the "high most compelling" priority rating. The Group felt that this could not be right and as a Labour Group they were not prepared to ignore those most in need. Councillor Keith thanked the other groups for supporting this measure.

The Labour Group had also argued behind the scenes in the budget round for the retention of budgets that benefit the most disadvantaged as would be expected from Labour Councillors.

He continued that there is no sugar coating the situation that the Council finds itself in. The cuts announced since October and being agreed formally at this meeting will hurt and result in curtailed service provision, fewer resources in classrooms, less roads maintenance and higher charges – it could be called a tax and axe budget.

He continued that the Labour Group had tried to participate in the budget process as the people who elect Councillors would expect. He wanted to pay tribute to the Council Leader in the way in which she had tried to reach across the chamber. It

would be fair to say that Members have agreed to disagree on things but that was in a spirit of trying to seek common ground where possible. In short, Councillors have compromised for the good of the people of Moray.

He added that this year had also seen the SNP Group participate more fully in the process and there was agreement for the coming year for more collegiate working and welcomed the SNP Group's new position.

Finally, he concluded that he would like to commend Officers for their assistance in the budget process and the support which they had afforded himself in his role as Labour Group Leader.

Councillor van der Horn praised the collegiate approach to the budget and as the singular member of the Scottish Green Party in the Council said he was grateful to all the Officers for the support they had given him in being able to formulate ideas. He further thanked the Climate team in particular and the work they are doing in helping the Council move forward and adapt to the pressures of climate change.

He further added that he is looking forward to seeing how the transformation and innovation evolves within the Council.

In closing he welcomed the proposal to reduce the use of glyphosate within Moray which will have far reaching effects on the environment and people of Moray and using money from the transformation reserves to help access money from the Just Transition Fund.

Following the comments from the Group Leaders, the Chair then afforded other Councillors the opportunity to comment on the proposed budget. Councillors Cowe and Ross both provided comments in support of the proposed budget.

Councillor McLennan, expressed concern regarding the budget but did not submit an amendment.

Therefore following further consideration and there being no one otherwise minded the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) a Council Tax freeze for 2024/25;
- ii) provision of £9,288,000 for budget pressures as listed in APPENDIX 2;
- iii) budgeted expenditure of £278,794,000 for 2024/25
- iv) indicative budgets for 2025/26 and 2026/27 as set out in APPENDIX 1;
- v) funding of £83,805,000 for Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) as set out in paragraph 6.6;
- vi) transfers from the ear-marked reserve for Council priorities of £1,000,000 into free general reserve and £1,500,000 into the ear-marked reserve for transformation of services and renaming the residual amount in the Council priorities reserve as an ear-marked reserve for workforce planning; and
- vii) use of earmarked reserves totalling £731,000 for transformation, £1,136,000 for Moray Growth Deal cash flow and of £10,156,000 from covid reserves to balance the budget.

8. Housing Revenue Account Annual Budget 2024-25

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presenting details of the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Proposal for 2024-25 for approval.

As Chair of Housing and Community Safety Committee, Councillor Dunbar moved the budget for 2024-25. This was seconded by Councillor Gatt.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) to note changes since the Housing Business Plan was reviewed in 2022 and the proposed review of the business plan in 2024/25, as detailed in section 3;
- ii) to note details of the rent restructure which has been undertaken, as detailed in Section 4;
- iii) the proposed HRA Budget for 2024/25 (Appendix i) and Housing Investment Plan (Appendix II), including the level of HRA reserves in line with the Housing Reserves Policy as detailed in paragraph 7.13;
- iv) to note the results of consultation with tenants on options for the 2024/25 rent increase as detailed in section 6;
- v) Council house rents increase of 7.7% for 2024/25
- vi) that garage rents are increased by 7.7% for 2024/25;
- vii) that grass cutting charges are increased by 7.7% for 2024/25;
- viii) provision of £200k for service developments as detailed in paragraph 8.17; and
- ix) to note the three year projection to 2026-27 at Appendix III.

9. Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) seeking approval of the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy for 2024/25 and to approve the indicators which will be used to measure the Council's performance in capital investment decisions.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed to:

- i) approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2024/25;
- ii) approve the Investment Strategy for 2024/25 at Appendix 1;
- iii) approve the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2024/25 at Appendix 3; and
- iv) note the indicative Prudential Indicators and limits for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Minute of Meeting of the Moray Council

Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor David Gordon, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Neil McLennan, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor John Stuart, Councillor Draeyk van der Horn, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

Councillor Neil Cameron

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Chief Officer - Health and Social Care Moray, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Housing and Property, Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Head of Service, Health and Social Care Moray, Strategic Planning and Development Manager, Moray Growth Deal Programme Manager, Principal Planning Officer and Democratic Services Manager.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Kathleen Robertson.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests

In terms of Standing Orders 21 and 23 and The Councillors' Code of conduct the Council noted that there were no declarations for Group Leaders or Spokesperson in regard to any prior decisions taken on how members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

In terms of transparency, Councillors Gordon and Macrae asked that in terms of Item 12 on the agenda, Charging for Services they were directors of the Board of Moray Leisure.

Councillor Williams, in terms of Items 11, 14 and 19 on the agenda asked that it be noted that for transparency a member of his family was employed by an

organisation involved in the items but following advice from the Monitoring Officer felt it did not meet the 2 part test and would remain in the meeting.

3. Resolution

Councillor Ross sought clarification on why Item 19 on the agenda was being held in confidence on the agenda. In response, the Chair confirmed that it was due to commercial sensitivity.

Thereafter the meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Items 18 - 21 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class.

Para number of the minute	Para Number of Schedule of 7a
19	Para 1 Information relating to staffing matters Para 11 Information relating to any consultations or negotiations in connection with labour relations
21	Para 9 Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority
22	Para 1 Information relating to staffing matters

4. Minute of Meeting of Moray Council on 6 December 2023

The minute of the meeting of Moray Council on 6 December 2023 was submitted and unanimously approved.

5. Minutes of Special Meeting of Moray Council on 12 December 2023

The minute of the Special Meeting of Moray Council on 12 December 2023 was submitted and unanimously approved.

6. Minutes of Special Meeting of Moray Council on 24 January 2024

The minutes of the Special Meeting of Moray Council on 24 January 2024 was submitted and unanimously approved.

7. Written Questions

The Council noted that no written questions had been submitted.

8. Notice of Motion - Report Request on Artificial Intelligence

In terms of Standing Order 35a there was submitted a Notice of Motion by Councillor Leadbitter, seconded by Councillor Lawrence in the following terms:

Artificial Intelligence

Preliminary Issues

None to consider

Background

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly evolving as a consequence of recent advancements in technology and the design of competing artificial intelligences in a wide range of environments.

It is widely reported that the pace of development of AI is highly likely to be the most rapidly evolving technology ever seen by humankind with many potential applications - both positive and negative.

AI is better understood in some industries than others and it is vital that the public sector, including Local Government is embracing and understanding this issue, ensuring we have actions in place to help us both utilise AI and manage its impact on our communities and the services we provide for them.

At the recent AI Safety Summit the introductory paragraph stated:

“We are in the midst of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has begun and promises to further transform nearly every aspect of our economy and society, bringing with it huge opportunities but also risks that could threaten global stability and undermine our values.”

This provides a useful summary of what we require to understand in the deliver of our own services.

Action

Council requests an officer report providing a high-level assessment of the Council's readiness in respect of the rapidly evolving impact of (AI) across our operations, including but not limited to:

Financial implications

- the risks and opportunities for the broad range of services provided by the council;
 - N.B. It should be understood that whilst the Council's ICT Service will have a key role to play, the risks and opportunities are much broader and could impact significantly on the provision and structure of a wide range of services
- skills gaps that the Council may have in relation to AI and how they might be addressed;
- strategies and policies that require to be developed and/or updated in respect of AI;

- estimated timescales over which such strategies and policies should be considered;
- the potential risks of not taking action.
- Any direct costs would relate to further actions, which would be considered in the requested report.
- There is an indirect cost of officer time, however as AI is a major and rapidly emerging technology across our services, and which has the potential to both enhance and disrupt those services in a comparatively short timeframe, it is expected that officers will already be considering potential implications for their services and the Council as a whole, therefore this motion sets in place a clear route for Councillors to consider this urgent emerging issue.

The Chair advised that the Council has an ICT Digital Strategy and Action Plan which was approved by Corporate Committee on 29 August 2023 and Priority 4 was Forward Planning which had the following action at 4.8 - considers the potential for new solutions i.e. AI, Chatbots, the internet of things to deliver improvements to service delivery and efficiencies with the planned outcomes of benefits of implementing solutions identified and incorporated into forward plans with Services with a measure of new technologies adopted within services. The timing of this work is March 2025/26 with a priority rating of 3 with clear benefits for importance that may be outweighed by other actions.

The Chair further added that the Council recognises the pace at which technology moves and are also aware that as part of the budget it was agreed to add as part of the transformation reserve so the Council can invest in innovation.

The Chair continued that it was important that any benefit from AI is appropriately prioritised alongside other essential ICT work already agreed. She therefore proposed that the Strategic Leadership Forum consider the issue and bring forward as part of the annual update to the ICT Digital Strategy and Action Plan ahead, of the August timescale for review.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) confirmed that the Council's ICT Strategy covers all services and not just the ICT section and sets the Council's digital priorities within the Corporate Plan and covers staff and customer expectations and the need for services to fully engage in using the technologies in order to drive out the benefits.

She further added that if the Council was minded to accelerate the work around AI then the intention would be that it would be looked at in the area of advantages to services but would need to consider re-prioritising both within ICT and Services in terms of how the work would be brought forward and guidance from Council on the work to be prioritised would be helpful.

Councillor Macrae proposed discussing the issue at the ICT Working Group initially for discussion and then for a report to be brought back to a future meeting of the Council.

Councillor Leadbitter agreed that the pace of AI is accelerating at such a pace, it would be useful to discuss at the ICT Working Group to determine the information available to allow Councillors to understand whether this work is a higher priority than currently prioritised.

Councillor Lawrence confirmed that the notice of motion is requesting an oversight of AI within the Council as it will have huge ramifications on all services.

The Chair agreed that the Strategic Leadership Forum and ICT Working Group would be a good place to discuss the issue to provide information and scope for a report back to Corporate Committee as soon as practicable and asked Councillors Leadbitter and Lawrence if they were happy to accept the amendment.

The Chief Executive added that there is a lot of work going on with Government Bodies and partners who are looking at issues for local government and devising guidance and internal discussions would allow for the national guidance to become available.

Following further consideration, Councillors Leadbitter and Lawrence confirmed that they were happy for the initial discussions to take place with the Strategic Leadership Forum and to also include the ICT Working Group and for a report to be presented to Corporate Committee as soon as practicable.

There being no on otherwise minded the Council agreed that initial discussions take place with the cross party Strategic Leadership Forum and the ICT Working Group with a report to be presented to Corporate Committee as soon as practicable.

9. Moray Integration Joint Board Summary Report

The meeting had before it, a report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray informing the Council of the latest approved minutes of the meetings of the Moray Integration Joint Board.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed to note the content of the report.

Councillor McLennan left the meeting during the consideration of this item.

10. Revenue Expenditure 31 December 2023

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advising Council of the revenue budget monitoring position to 31 December 2023 and the current out-turn for 2023/24.

As part of her introduction to the report the Chief Financial Officer confirmed that confirmation had now been received from the Scottish Government that they will not withhold the retained portion of the grant, which amounts to £769,000 and results in an underspend of £894,000.

Following consideration, the Council unanimously agreed the note:

- i) the budget monitoring position of £1,742,000 over budget for 2023/24 as at 31 December 2023;
- ii) that the budget position consists of an underspend on Devolved School budgets of £818,000, an underspend of £116,000 on Children's Services, an underspend of £193,000 on General Services Housing and Property, an overspend of £289,000 on Environmental and Commercial Services and

£210,000 on Economic Growth and Development. There is also an overspend on Social Care Services delivered on behalf of the Moray Integration Joint Board of £2,313,000 and an overspend on other services of £57,000;

- iii) movement of £5,897,000 increase in General Revenue Grants, as detailed in paragraph 3.5; and
- iv) the current estimated out-turn for 2023/24 of an underspend in Council services, including Health and Social Care, of £962,00 after adjusting for the cost sharing agreement with NHS for MIJB. With projected overspends in loans charges of £451,000 and increased use of provisions more than budgeted, this results in an overall projected spend of £1,497,000 but with additional funding there is a decrease in the use of Council reserves of £125,000 than is budgeted.

11. Capital Plan 2023-24 Q3

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) advising the Council of capital expenditure to 31 December 2023 and of updated estimates of projected expenditure under the capital plan for 2023/24 profiled into quarters.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed to:

- i) note expenditure to 31 December 2023 of £15,841,000, which is £6million less than estimated in detail at the end of quarter 2;
- ii) note the current projected expenditure of £25, 178,000 for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 1 in detail and as adjusted at top level in paragraph 7.1 below;
- iii) note the projected overall expenditure for projects spanning more than one financial year, as set out in Appendix 2; and
- iv) approve amendments to the 2023/24 and 2024/25 capital plan as detailed in section 6.1 of this report.

12. Charging for Services

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking Council to approve revised charges for Council services for 2024/25.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed to approve the charges for Council services for 2024/25 set out in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4.

13. Telford Bridge Craigellachie

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing the Council of the condition of Telford Bridge and what options were available for its future operation.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) to note the ownership, condition and maintenance responsibilities relating to the Telford Bridge as set out in the report;
- ii) that the Council's future responsibilities are as set out in para 7.2 - 7.5; and
- iii) that should there be sufficient interest from an external group that the Council would further explore the options set out in paras 6.7 - 6.10 subject to its reasonable costs being covered by a third party.

14. Moray Growth Deal Annual Report

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) which provided Council with a draft copy of the Moray Growth Deal's 2023 annual report for consideration.

The Council joined the Chair in thanking the Moray Growth Deal Team on the work done on the various projects to date.

Councillor McLennan re-joined the meeting at this juncture.

Following consideration, the Council agreed to:

- i) note the draft annual report; and
- ii) delegate authority to the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) to approve a final iteration of the report, following engagement with key stakeholders and the Scottish and UK Governments. This will then be submitted to a future meeting of Moray Council for noting.

15. Elgin Long Term Town Plan

The meeting had before it a report asking the Council to nominate elected members to sit on the Elgin Town Board and to note progress to establish the Board following the announcement on 1 October 2023 that Elgin is one of 55 towns in the UK to receive £20million funding from the UK Government.

As part of his introduction, the Strategic Planning and Development Manager asked Council to note the following amendments to the report:

- recommendation (iii) should read - note the appointment of the chair of the Elgin town Board will be done in consultation with the local MP.
- paragraph 4.8 the reference to 3 years should be 2 years; and
- paragraph 6.3 where the report states 2 elected members, it should read 2 - 4 members, following attendance at a Webinar, which was attended by representatives of the 55 towns, it was confirmed that the political balance should be proportional to the size of the board.

Councillor Divers expressed concern that there are no Elgin Councillors included in the proposed members of the Board.

Councillor Keith, confirmed that he considered it necessary to have Elgin Councillors represented on the Board.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that the Elgin Town Board should be considered as an outside body and it was a decision for the Council as to who should be appointed to it.

Councillor Divers moved that there should be 3 Councillors on the Board 1 from each party and the Council Leader has the overall Moray wide view.

In response, the Chair felt, based on the advice given by Officers and the anticipated size of the Board being 15 members that 4 Councillors would be too many as it would make up a quarter of the size and that is not the intention of the Board.

The Chair proposed a compromise position of the Council Leader and 2 members, 1 from each of the 2 largest opposition groups. It was further agreed that representation should be Elgin Councillors in the main therefore it was suggested that 2/3 of the Council representatives be from Elgin Wards and, if at any time in future the Council Leader represents an Elgin Ward, then one of the other positions should be taken by a Councillor outwith Elgin to ensure fair geographical representation.

Councillor Divers confirmed that he was happy with the proposal.

Following further consideration the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) note the progress in establishing an Elgin Town Board before the deadline of 1 April 2024;
- ii) note the guidance in Appendix 1 as to representation on the Board;
- iii) note the appointment of the Chair of the Elgin Town Board will be done in consultation with the local MP;
- iv) note the proposed initial members of the Board
- v) note the proposed steps and timeline to prepare the 10 year vision and 3 year Investment Plan;
- vi) that the Council Leader and 2 members, 1 from each of the 2 largest opposition groups be appointed to the Board with 2/3 of the Council representatives being from Elgin Wards and, if at any time in future the Council Leader represents an Elgin Ward, then one of the other positions should be taken by a Councillor outwith Elgin to ensure fair geographical representation; and
- vii) Group Leaders to notify Committee Services with the names of the Councillors who will be sitting on the Board including the substitute members

16. Review of Standing Orders

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) inviting the Council to consider the timescale for changes to the Council's Standing Orders as detailed in Section 4 of the report.

In respect of the proposal to stop reading out written questions Councillor Leadbitter sought clarification that the member submitting the written question would still be able to ask a supplementary question and that the response to the written question should be published prior to the Committee meeting.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance confirmed that a supplementary question would still be allowed and that the question and response would be published prior to the meeting.

Councillor van der Horn asked that Officers look at how apologies are recorded and the reasons for the absence.

The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance replied that this was not something that was covered under Standing Orders but would be covered by a review of the Remote Meetings Protocol under the second tier governance documents and agreed to look at the issue with the Democratic Services Manager.

Councillor McLennan moved to remove the recommendation to remove Question Time from the agenda. On failing to find a seconder, Councillor McLennan's motion fell and in terms of Standing Order 67 his dissent was recorded.

Following further consideration the Council agreed:

- i) the material changes to Standing Orders as set out in paragraph 4.1/Appendix 1;
- ii) the proposed minor changes to Standing Orders set out in paragraph 4.2 below/Appendix 2;
- iii) that a final version of the Standing Orders, incorporating the agreed position from recommendations (i) and (ii) above, will be submitted to the next meeting of the Council; and
- iv) to defer the wider annual review of the Scheme of Administration and Scheme of Delegation from May 2024 until December 2024 to bring the reviews back in line with the annual Standing Orders review.

17. Public Performance Report 2022-23

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asking the Council to consider the Public Performance Report (PPR) 2022-23 which reports progress and performance of Council services against Corporate Plan priorities.

Following consideration the Council approved the Public Performance Report 2022-23 in its reporting of Council performance and progress against Corporate Plan priorities and agree the PPR for publication on the Council website.

18. Question Time

Under reference to the minute of the meeting of Moray Council on 6 December 2023, Councillor Ross sought clarification on why comments made by Councillor Harris had not been minuted.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance confirmed that the minutes are not a verbatim record of meetings.

19. Voluntary Early Retirement Application [Para 1]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asking Council to consider an application under the terms of the agreed Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed to approve the application for Voluntary Early Retirement contained within Appendix A.

20. RESUMPTION OF MEETING

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor David Gordon, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Neil McLennan, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor John Stuart, Councillor Draeyk van der Horn, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

Councillor Neil Cameron

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Housing and Property, Principal Planning Officer and Democratic Services Manager.

21. Elgin Community Centre [Para 9]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) providing Council with an update on discussions regarding the future short-term use of Elgin Community Centre and an approach made to Officers about leasing or selling the property.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) to note the update provided in relation to agreeing terms for a short term lease to Elgin Town Hall Group detailed in paragraph 4.3;
- ii) to note that an approach has been made to Officers about the potential lease or sale of the property detailed in paragraphs 4.5; 4.6 and Appendix III; and
- iii) that Officers continue to facilitate Elgin Town Hall Group's short term use of Elgin Community Centre as outlined in the report approved at Council on 28 June 2023 (para 19 of the minute refers).

22. Recruitment of Interim Chief Executive

The meeting had before it a report by the Chief Executive asking the Council to note the proposed arrangements for recruiting an interim Chief Executive.

The Council joined Councillor Cowe in wishing Mr Burns a happy and health retirement.

Councillor Keith sought clarification on how the recruitment panel was made up as he felt that the Labour Group should be represented in the panel.

The Chair confirmed that there was no intention to exclude the Labour Group and that she would be happy to swap the Civic Leader for Councillor Keith on the panel but re-assured Councillor Keith the appointment would not be a political one, the appointment would be based on what is best for Moray Council.

Councillor McLennan moved that the panel should consist of members from every political party and independent Councillors. On failing to find a seconder, Councillor McLennan's motion fell and in terms of Standing Order 67 his dissent was recorded.

Following further consideration, the Council agreed to note the proposed arrangements for recruitment of an interim Chief Executive, subject to the change to members on the recruitment panel.

Minute of Special Meeting of the Moray Council

Wednesday, 27 March 2024

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor David Gordon, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Neil McLennan, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor John Stuart, Councillor Draeyk van der Horn, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

Councillor Neil Cameron

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Environmental Services Manager, Consultancy Manager, Democratic Services Manager, Communities Service Manager and Opportunities for All Officer.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Kathleen Robertson.

2. Message of Condolence

The Council joined the Chair in sending their thoughts and condolences to all the families affected by the tragic road accident the evening before and passed on their thanks to all those from the emergency services who would have attended the scene.

3. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Orders 21 and 23 and The Councillors' Code of conduct Councillor Robertson confirmed that the Conservative Group would be voting as a group in relation to Item 5b on the agenda.

The Council noted that there were no other declarations for Group Leaders or Spokesperson in regard to any prior decisions taken on how members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

4. Resolution

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Items 18 - 21 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class.

Para number of the minute	Para Number of Schedule 7a
6	Para 9 Information on terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the Authority

5. Charging for Services

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking the Council to approve the revised charges for Council services for 2024/25.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed to:

- i) note that a review of the out of area policy will be undertaken as set out in para 3.10; and
- ii) approve the charges for Council services for 2024/25 set out in paragraph 3.3.

6. Review of Standing Orders

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) inviting Council to approve the revised Standing Orders following the 2023/24 review.

In introducing the report, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance spoke about the reasons for absence and confirmed that it was open to Members to reach a decision on whether to record reasons for apologies.

Councillor Williams indicated that for various reasons, including the safety of Councillors and their families that he was not in favour of having to submit reasons for absence other than if it was due to technical reasons and moved to remove the other reasons indicated in the report.

Councillor Fernandes confirmed that he also felt there was no reason to record reasons for absence and seconded the motion.

Councillor Macrae stated that he was happy to accept the reasons proposed in the report as he felt that when Councillors are elected to office, they are accountable to the public and for transparency proposed adopting the absence reasons. He further added that members of the public are interested in members attendance and expenses. This was seconded by Councillor Leadbitter.

Councillor Leadbitter in supporting the amendment added that work is being done through CoSLA and other bodies to try and professionalise the role of Councillors in a

bid to make it more attractive to people in the future to increase the representation in Chambers across the country.

Councillor Dunbar sought agreement from Councillor Williams to amend his motion to include the Other Council Business option as she had been unable to attend some meeting due to other Council commitments. Councillor Williams and Councillor Fernandes confirmed that they were happy to accept this addition.

Councillor Lawrence sought clarification on how connection issues would be determined as a reason for absence.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance confirmed that this reason would be used if the Council had failed to provide the system to allow Members to join remotely as had happened recently and not individual connection issues due to poor broadband.

On the division there voted:

For the Motion (12)	Councillors Williams, Fernandes, Bloomfield, Colyer, Divers, Dunbar, Gatt, Keith, McLennan, Mustard, Robertson and Ross.
For the Amendment (13)	Councillors Macrae, Gordon, Allan, Coull, Cowe, Harris, Lawrence, Leadbitter, McBain, Morrison, Stuart, van der Horn and Warren
Abstention (0)	

Accordingly the amendment became the finding of the meeting and Council agreed:

- i) the final version of the Council's Standing Orders following the 2023/24 review; and
- ii) to record reasons for apologies submitted for Committee meetings.

7. Cloddach Bridge Business Case

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing the Council of the draft business case for the replacement of Cloddach Bridge and to seek a decision on whether the Council will provide funding for the replacement.

Councillor Mustard moved to note recommendations (i) and (ii) and agree to resource (iii) and (iv). This was seconded by Councillor Dunbar.

During consideration concern was raised by a number of Councillors on where the additional money for the bridge was going to come from and what other projects would be affected by the decision to progress with this works.

Councillor Leadbitter therefore proposed agreeing recommendation (i) and (ii), deleting recommendations (iii) and (iv) and replacing with a new recommendation (iii) as follows:

For the reasons set out in para 3.15 agree to delegate authority to the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services in consultation with the Council Leader and Chief Executive to present the Full Business Case to the Department for Transport

(DfT) and HM Treasury stating that the Council will support the construction of a replacement bridge, as per the significance placed on the project by the Chancellor of the Exchequer during his Financial Statement and Budget Report of 15 March 2023, subject to the UK Government covering all construction and project management costs.

This was seconded by Councillor Keith.

On the division there voted:

For the Motion (12)	Councillors Mustard, Dunbar, Bloomfield, Colyer, Cowe, Gatt, Gordon, Macrae, McBain, Robertson, Ross and Williams
For the Amendment (12)	Councillors Leadbitter, Keith, Fernandes, Coull, Divers, Harris, Lawrence, McLennan, Morrison, Stuart, van der Horn and Warren
Abstention (1)	Councillor Allan

There being an equality of votes, the Chair in terms of Standing Order 65(e) had the casting vote and voted in favour of the Motion. Therefore the motion became the finding of the meeting and Council agreed to:

- i) note the findings of the draft Economic and Financial Case from the Business Case to replace Cloddach Bridge;
- ii) note that the community has been unable to source funding to date;
- iii) resource the remaining £2.737million required to fully fund and the design and construction of a replacement bridge from Council capital funding; and
- iv) delegate authority to the Head of Environment and Commercial Services in consultation with the Council Leader and Chief Executive for approval and submission of the Full Business Case to the Department for Transport.

8. New Elgin Community Hub [Para 9]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) seeking approval to allocate funds to support the lease of a new community hub in the New Elgin area, on behalf of the Moray Pathways Local Employability Partnership.

Councillor Mustard moved to include an additional recommendation for a report to come back to Council in 9 months time to report on the outcomes of the project.

Following further consideration and there being no one otherwise minded the Council unanimously agreed to:

- i) approve the carry forward and allocation of funds to support the lease of a new community hub in the New Elgin area, on behalf of the Moray Pathways Local Employability Partnership; and
- ii) instruct the Head of Housing and Property to negotiate main lease terms of an appropriate property and subsequently instruct the Legal Services Manager to

conclude a lease, subject to this and ancillary costs set out in the report being within the budget carried forward.

- iii) Update report to come back to Council for consideration in 9 months on the outcomes of the project to date.

Minute of Special Meeting of the Moray Council**Wednesday, 24 April 2024****Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX****PRESENT**

Councillor James Allan, Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor Neil Cameron, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Cowe, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor David Gordon, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Graham Leadbitter, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor John Stuart, Councillor Draeyk van der Horn, Councillor Sonya Warren

APOLOGIES

Councillor Neil McLennan, Councillor Ben Williams

IN ATTENDANCE

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Head of Economic Growth and Development, Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Chief Financial Officer, Strategic Planning and Development Manager, Legal Services Manager, Rowena MacDougall, Planning Officer and Democratic Services Manager.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired for Items 2 – 16 by Councillor Kathleen Robertson and Items 17 and 18 by Councillor Donald Gatt.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 21 and 23 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from Group Leaders or Spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

3. Resolution

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Items 17 - 19 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class.

Para number of the minute	Para Number of Schedule 7a
---------------------------	----------------------------

5	1 Information Relating to Staffing Matters
6	1 Information Relating to Staffing Matters 11 Information relating to any consultations or negotiations in connection with labour relations
7	6 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person(s) 8 Information on the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Authority.

4. Welcome Back

The Council joined the Chair in welcoming Councillor Cameron back to his first meeting following a period of illness.

5. Varying Order of Business

In terms of Standing Order 29, the Chair sought agreement from the Council to suspend Standing Order 29 and deal with the confidential items on the agenda first to ensure they could be considered by all Councillors as the Chair and one of the confidential report authors needed to leave, possibly prior to the report being considered.

This was unanimously agreed.

6. Short to Medium Term Financial Planning [Para 1]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) to consider feedback from consultation on those savings approved subject to consultation and to consider amendments to the Council's budget projections since the budget was approved.

Councillor Gatt moved to approve the recommendations and agree Option 3 as detailed in paragraph 6.3 of the report. This was seconded by Councillor Macrae.

Councillor Leadbitter confirmed that although he was not in disagreement with the motion from Councillor Gatt, he wished to test what the Council thought and seconded by Councillor Fernandes proposed approving the recommendations and agree Option 2 as detailed in paragraph 6.3.

On the division there voted:

For the Motion (14)	Councillors Gatt, Macrae, Allan, Bloomfield, Colyer, Cowe, Divers, Dunbar, Gordon, Keith, McBain, Mustard, Robertson and Ross
---------------------	---

For the Amendment (9)	Councillors Leadbitter, Fernandes, Cameron, Coull, Harris, Lawrence, Morrison, Stuart and Warren
Not Voted (1)	Councillor van der Horn

Accordingly, the motion became the finding of the meeting and the Council agreed to:

- i) note the revised estimated out-turn for 2023/24 and revised budget for 2024/25;
- ii) approve option 3 as detailed in paragraph 6.3; and
- iii) approve the savings summarised in Appendix 2, having first considered the results of the consultation as summarised in paragraphs 5.7 - 5.8 and more fully in Appendix 3.

7. Voluntary Early Retirement Application [Para 1 and 11]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asking the Council to consider an application under the terms of the agreed Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) Scheme.

Following consideration, the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) to proceed with the proposed reduction of the post outlined in Appendix A; and
- ii) approve the application for Voluntary Early Retirement contained therein.

8. Buckie Dredging Update [Paras 6 and 8]

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking the Council to homologate the decision made by the Chief Executive and to inform the Council of additional costs to the approved dredging works that are required in Buckie Harbour to ensure that the Council is meeting its obligations.

Following consideration, the Council unanimously agreed to homologate the decision made by the Chief Executive to approve additional costs of up to £450,000 to the approved dredging works that are required in Buckie Harbour to ensure that the Council is meeting its contractual obligations.

9. Transformation Strategy

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) asking the Council to approve a first iteration of work towards a new Council Transformation Strategy.

Following consideration, the Council unanimously agreed to:

- i) approve the first iteration of work towards developing the Council Transformation Strategy (Appendix 1) to ensure a continued focus on delivery transformation projects to support the Council's financial sustainability and provide a sound foundation for essential future transformation work; and
- ii) further development work set out in the report.

10. Moray Town Centre Health Check 2023

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) reporting the key findings of the Moray Town Centre Health Check 2023 and to ask the Council to consider adopting the Moray Town Centre Health Check Report 2023 as a material consideration in future retail planning policy and planning application decision making.

Following lengthy consideration, the Council unanimously agreed to:

- i) note the findings of the Moray Town Centre Health Check Report 2023 and the first town centre perception survey;
- ii) adopt the Moray Town Centre Health Check Report 2023, as set out in Appendix 1, as a material consideration in future retail planning policy and planning application decision making from 30 April 2024;
- iii) the publication of the Town Centre Health Check Report 2023 on the Planning and Development website pages; and
- iv) note the ongoing work to source town centre footfall counters.

11. Moray Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking the Council to consider and approve the Moray Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023.

Following consideration, the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) to note the findings of the Moray Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023;
- ii) the Moray Play Sufficiency Assessment, as set out in Appendix 1;
- iii) the Moray Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023, as set out in Appendix 1; as a material consideration for future planning policy and planning application decision making from 30 April 2024 and submit this a part of the Local Development Plan Evidence report; and
- iv) to delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to prepare a StoryMap of the Moray Play Sufficiency Assessment and for this to be published online.

12. Draft Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) seeking the agreement of the Council to approve the draft Moray Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and Delivery Plan ahead of public consultation.

Following consideration, the Council agreed to:

- i) approve the draft Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) (Appendix 1) and Delivery Plan (Appendix 2); and
- ii) note that following public consultation on the draft strategy and delivery plan, the final versions will be presented to Council on 26 June 2024 for approval.

13. Natural Capital Enhancement Opportunities

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) presenting the results of studies conducted to identify natural capital enhancement opportunities in Moray and to seek the agreement of the Council to progress the opportunities identified via the local development plan and development of a suitable project delivery model.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) to note the contents of studies conducted to identify natural capital enhancement opportunities on Moray Council managed land (Appendix 1) and the wider Moray area (appendices 2 and 3); and
- ii) that the opportunities identified be progressed as part of the Council's next local development plan and through development of a suitable project delivery model to be presented to and agreed by a future meeting of the Council.

14. National Planning Framework 4 Policy 11c - Maximising Net Economic Impact Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking Council to agree the draft Maximising Net Economic Impact Supplementary Planning Guidance and that it be subject to public consultation for a period of 12 weeks.

Following consideration, the Council agreed:

- i) the draft Maximising Net Economic Impact Supplementary Planning Guidance and that the draft is made available for public consultation for a period of 12 weeks;
- ii) that responses to the draft be reported back to a future meeting of the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee; and
- iii) that external consultancy support is commissioned to work with Officers and partners to develop a Regional Socio-Economic Impact Plan.

15. Tribute to Member of Staff Leaving

The meeting, in noting that this would be the last meeting of the Council prior to the Head of Economic Growth and Development, retiring from the Council, joined the Chair in paying tribute to Mr Grant for his contribution to the delivery of Council services in Moray and wished him well for the future. She further thanked him for all his help to herself and fellow Councillors over the years.

16. Draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2024

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking Council to agree the draft Woodland and Forestry Strategy as part of the evidence for the new Local Development Plan and to agree that the draft Strategy be subject to public consultation for a period of 12 weeks.

Following consideration the Council unanimously agreed:

- i) the draft Moray Woodland and Forestry Strategy 2024
- ii) the draft strategy is made available for public consultation for 12 weeks; and
- iii) that responses to the draft will be reported back to the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee.

17. Biodiversity Study

Prior to consideration of the item, Councillor Gatt took over the role of Chair of the meeting as Councillor Robertson had to leave the meeting at 12.30pm.

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informing the Council of the contents and recommendations from a Biodiversity Study undertaken to provide evidence for the next Local Development Plan.

Following consideration, the Council unanimously agreed to:

- i) note the contents and recommendations within the Biodiversity Study and their relation to the next Local Development Plan; and
- ii) approve the approach outlined in paragraph 4.6 to outsource ecological expertise for larger or complex planning applications.

Councillor Robertson left the meeting following the consideration of this item.

18. Moray Local Development Plan 2027 Evidence Report

The meeting had before it a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) asking the Council to approve the Evidence Report for the Moray Local Development Plan 2027 and delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to submit to the Scottish Ministers for the Gatecheck.

Following consideration, the Council unanimously agreed to:

- i) approve the Evidence Report for the Moray Local Development Plan 2027 (LDP27);
- ii) note that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report will be submitted to the SEA Gateway;
- iii) delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to update the Evidence Report to include references for core documents and other relevant evidence and consultees; and

- iv) delegate authority to the Head of Economic Growth and Development to submit the Evidence Report to the Scottish Ministers via the Scottish Government Division for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) for the Gatecheck.



REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 22 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: ANNUAL APPROVAL OF COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION TO MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD ANNUAL BUDGET AND BOARD MINUTES FOR INFORMATION

BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE MORAY

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To approve the Council's contribution to the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) budget and to inform the Council of the latest approved minutes of the meetings of the MIJB.

1.2 This report is submitted under Section II (22) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- i) consider and note the annual contribution to the MIJB budget;**
- ii) note a recovery plan is being prepared in an endeavour to manage the overspend of the budget; and**
- iii) note the content of this report in regards to the approved Minutes.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The MIJB was established on 6 February 2016 under the terms of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 with full delegation of functions and resources to enable integration of primary and community health and social care services effective from 1 April 2016. The MIJB is a separate legal organisation and acts as principal in its own right.

The principal ambitions of health and social care integration are to:

- Support the improvement of the quality and consistency of services for patients, carers, service-users and their families.
- Provide seamless, joined-up quality health and social care services in order to care for people in their homes or a homely setting where it is safe to do so.
- Ensure resources are used effectively and efficiently to deliver services.

Financial Management of the MIJB

- 3.2 As Council is aware from the regular financial monitoring reports produced by the Chief Financial Officer and reported to Corporate Committee and where appropriate meetings of Council, there is a significant overspend in the budget of the MIJB.
- 3.3 Financial management of the MIJB is regulated by the Health and Social Care Integration Scheme (**Appendix 1**). This Scheme provides where appropriate that variations to planned expenditure by the MIJB be resolved by agreement being reached by the MIJB Chief Officer, the MIJB Chief Financial Officer and Director of Finance of NHS Grampian and the Section 95 Officer of the Council (Chief Finance Officer) must agree a recovery plan to balance the overspending balance.
- 3.4 Agreement has been reached between the respective officers and work is currently underway to produce the required recovery plan in an endeavour to balance the overspending budget.

Minutes

- 3.5 The approved minute from the MIJB meeting held on 25 January 2024, which was accepted as a correct record of the meeting on 28 March 2024, can be found at **Appendix 2**. A few key highlights from the meeting for the Moray Council to note were, the MIJB:

25 January 2024

- Following a lengthy discussion, noted a report by the Chief Officer (CO) detailing the CO activities that support the delivery of the MIJB's strategic priorities.
- Noted the findings of the strategic review of the neurorehabilitation pathway and agreed that Aberdeen City IJB, as host IJB for this service, implements the proposed changes to the pathway in collaboration with Health and Social Care Moray (HSCM).
- Agreed to note the Chair and Vice Chair are due to rotate on 1 April 2024 and appointed Sandy Riddell as Chair of Audit, Performance and Risk Committee from 1 April 2024.
- Noted a progress report on Locality Plans and agreed that further progress reports be brought to the MIJB on a six monthly basis.
- Noted the current position in relation to Hopeman and Burghead branch surgery buildings and noted the request from the Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care that an officer from another Health and Social Care Partnership meet with representatives from HSCM to discuss the engagement and consultation process undertaken regarding the Hopeman and Burghead branch surgery premises.
- Agreed the role of Glasgow School of Art in supporting General Practice visioning work within Moray.
- Agreed the initiation of a process to begin scoping a replacement Social Work services client based recording system.
- Agreed the reappointment of Chief Internal Auditor for a further period of two years.
- Agreed the reappointment of Standards Officer and Depute Standards Officer for further period of two years.

- Noted that a Care for People Operational Framework has been developed in conjunction with its partners.
 - Approved the MIJB Reserves Policy.
 - Agreed to hold a workshop as soon as practicable to consider detailed and costed options with associated risks for transformational change to address the budget deficit and that the outcomes from the workshop be reported to the Board at the earliest opportunity for approval in order to set a balanced budget.
- 3.6 The link to the webcast and reports submitted to the MIJB meeting on 25 January 2024 can be found here:
<https://moray.cmis.uk.com/moray/CouncilandGovernance/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2009/Committee/18/Default.aspx>
- 3.7 The MIJB approved a working budget at the Board meeting on 28 March 2024, with the MIJB to consider a budget with savings to be agreed at its meeting on 30 May 2024. On 30 May the MIJB will be presented with a budget and recovery plan that will close the in year financial gap as far as possible, with savings that will potentially deliver over 2 years in full.
- 3.8 Approved minutes, reports and link to webcast library for all MIJB meetings can be found here:
https://moray.cmis.uk.com/moray/CouncilandGovernance/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/18/Default.aspx

4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

This report forms part of the governance arrangements of MIJB; good governance arrangements will support the Board to fulfil its objectives.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy or legal implications associated with this report.

(c) Financial implications

Work is currently underway in accordance with the Integration Scheme which regulates the process for addressing variations to the planned expenditure by the MIJB in an endeavour to balance the budget.

There are no financial implications associated with **Appendix 2** of this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications associated with this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required as there is no change to policy and procedures resulting from this report.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no climate change or biodiversity implications arising from this report.

(i) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with Corporate Manager, Health and Social Care Moray who is in agreement with the content in relation to their area of responsibility.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 This report provides a summary of the business addressed by the MIJB at their meeting on 25 January 2024.

Author of Report: Isla Whyte, Interim Support Manager, Health and Social
Care Moray
Background Papers: available online
Ref: SPMAN-305227695-136



**MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD
DIRECTION**

**Issued under Sections 26-28 of the Public Bodies (Joint Working)
(Scotland) Act 2014**

1.	Title of Direction and Reference Number	MIJB Updated Budget Position 20240328MC10
2.	Date Direction issued by the Moray Integration Joint Board	28.03.2024
3.	Effective date of the Direction	01.04.2024
4.	Direction to:	Moray Council
5.	Does the Direction supersede/update a previous Direction? If yes, include the reference number(s) of previous Direction	Yes last budget monitoring report for Quarter 3 of 23/24 budget outturn to MIJB on 28.03.2024
6.	Functions covered by Direction	All functions listed in Annex 1, Part 1 of the Moray Health and Social Care Integration Scheme and all functions listed in Annex 2, Part 1 of the Moray Health and Social Care Integration Scheme.
7.	Direction Narrative	Directed to deliver for the Board, the services noted below in pursuance of the functions noted below and within the associated budget noted below
8.	Budget Allocation by MIJB to deliver on the Direction	<i>Moray Council associated budget - £89.6 million, of which £0.7 million is ring fenced for Housing Revenue Account aids and adaptations.</i> All details contained in APPENDIX 1 to the report
9.	Desired Outcomes	The direction is intended to update and reflect the budget position for 2024/25

10.	Performance monitoring arrangements and review	<i>Directions will be reviewed by the Audit Performance & Risk Committee on a six monthly basis for assurance. Any concerns should be escalated at the first available opportunity to the MIJB. An annual report of all current Directions will be presented to the MIJB</i>
-----	--	--



MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE MORAY INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

Thursday, 25 January 2024

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Mr Simon Bokor-Ingram, Professor Duff Bruce, Mr Sean Coady, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Ms Sonya Duncan, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Dr Robert Lockhart, Ms Deirdre McIntyre, Mr Derick Murray, Ms Deborah O'Shea, Mr Sandy Riddell, Mr Dennis Robertson, Ms Elizabeth Robinson, Ms Tracy Stephen, Mr Kevin Todd, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

Mr Ivan Augustus, Mr Roddy Burns, Mr Adam Coldwells, Ms Jane Ewen, Dr Malcolm Simmons

IN ATTENDANCE

General Manager, Dr Gray's Hospital; Marie Simpson, Programme Manager, Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre (DHI) Scotland; Transformation Programme Manager, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership; Lead Pharmacist Primary Care, Moray Health and Social Care Partnership (MHSCP); Lead Pharmacy Technician, MHSCP; Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance and Caroline O'Connor, Committee Services Officer.

1. Chair

The meeting was chaired by Mr Dennis Robertson.

2. Declaration of Member's Interests

Mr Riddell stated for transparency that he was Chair of the Mental Welfare Commission Scotland.

The Board noted that there were no other declarations of member's interests.

3. Minutes of meeting of 30 November 2023

The minute of the meeting of 30 November 2023 was submitted and approved.

4. Action Log of 30 November 2023

The Action Log of the meeting of 30 November 2023 was discussed and updated accordingly.

5. Thanks

The Board, in noting that Mr Graham Hilditch had resigned due to other commitments, joined the Chair in paying tribute to Mr Hilditch for his contribution to the Board and wished him well for the future.

6. Congratulations

The Board joined the Chair in congratulating Ms Deborah O'Shea, Interim Chief Financial Officer on her permanent appointment to the post of Chief Financial Officer with effect from 1 April 2024.

7. Chief Officer Report

The meeting had before it a report by the Chief Officer informing the Board of the Chief Officer activities that support the delivery against the Moray Integration Joint Board's (MIJB's) strategic priorities articulated in the Strategic Plan, and the delivery against the 9 Health and Wellbeing outcomes. Key work for Moray Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) includes the continuation of a shift in the balance of care through implementing a Home First approach; remobilisation from the covid pandemic; supporting measures for the reduction of local covid transmission; and budget control.

The Chief Officer provided a further update to the Board in relation to the Ward 4 anti-ligature work and installation of MRI scanner at Dr Gray's Hospital, advising that Scottish Government funding was no longer available for the MRI scanner at this time which would also impact on the Ward 4 anti-ligature work as it was part of the same project.

The General Manager, Dr Gray's Hospital advised the Ward 4 work was paused and further discussions on funding streams would require to be held.

In response the Chair asked for an update to be prepared for the next meeting of the Board to provide reassurance regarding discussions and the process for continuation of the work.

Mr Riddell expressed concern about the budget pressures relating to Care at Home service and sought assurance that there was strategic direction with full understanding how the budget pressures have been manifested.

In response the Deputy Chief Officer confirmed the current delivery model is not working and a new outcome focussed delivery model is required. He confirmed he would prepare an update for the next meeting of the Board to provide assurance on the current position and actions undertaken.

Mr Murray sought an update on the trends in relation to unmet demand and delayed discharge.

In response the Chief Officer agreed a report would be prepared for the next Clinical and Care Governance Committee.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed:-

- i. to note the content of the report; and
- ii. that transforming services to meet the aspirations of the MIJB's Strategic Plan remains a priority.

8. Strategic Review of Neuro-Rehabilitation Pathway

The meeting had before it a report by the Lead for Allied Health Professionals and Specialist Rehabilitation Services and Transformation Programme Manager informing the Board of the findings and recommendations of a strategic review undertaken to identify the most effective delivery of Neurorehabilitation across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed:-

- i. to note the findings of the strategic review of the neurorehabilitation pathway;
- ii. that Aberdeen City Integration Joint Board (IJB) as host IJB for this service implements the proposed changes to the neurorehabilitation pathway in collaboration with Health and Social Care Moray (HSCM) and in a phased manner as set out in section 5;
- iii. agrees that an evaluation of Phase 1 will be shared with MIJB in September 2024 before Phase 2 commences; and
- iv. to note the engagement to date with the Aberdeenshire and Moray Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) and support the continuation of the engagement to help ensure the redesign continues to meet the needs of all three Partnerships.

9. Membership of Board and Committees

The meeting had before it a report by the Corporate Manager informing the Board of changes to the Membership of the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB), Audit, Performance and Risk (APR) Committee and Clinical and Care Governance (CCG) Committee.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed to note:-

- i. the Chair and Vice Chair are due to rotate on 1 April 2024;
- ii. the appointment of Sandy Riddell as Chair of the APR Committee from 1 April 2024;
- iii. the update regarding vacancies in National Health Service (NHS) voting membership, noting the temporary appointment of Sandy Riddell to the CCG Committee until such time as the new Health Board voting member is appointed,

and Service User Stakeholder position;

- iv. the appointment of Deirdre McIntyre as the new NHS Staff Partnership representative; and
- v. the updated membership of the Board and Committee attached at Appendix 1.

Councillor Williams left the meeting at this juncture.

10. Locality Planning Update

The meeting had before it a report by the Interim Deputy Head of Service informing the Board on the work done to date in relation the Health and Social Care Moray Locality Planning model.

Mr Riddell stated it would be useful in terms of providing assurance and understanding the potential for transformation if evidence was available to support the test of change in respect of successes shared across localities. Councillor Lawrence agreed such evidence would be useful to highlight positive examples and to evidence change against possible savings.

In response the Deputy Chief Officer agreed to include examples of evidence in the report to be presented to the Board on 29 August 2024.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed to:-

- i. note the progress made on locality plans since the previous report on 30 March 2023; and
- ii. agree that further progress reports be brought to the MIJB on a six monthly basis.

11. Lossiemouth Locality Health and Social Care Provision Update

The meeting had before it a report by the Deputy Head of Service (Interim) informing the Board on the progress made in relation to the development of health and social care provision within the Lossiemouth Locality, in partnership with the local community and practitioners.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed to:-

- i. note the current position in relation to Hopeman and Burghead branch surgery buildings;
- ii. note the request from the Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care that an officer from another Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) meet with representatives from Health and Social Care Moray (HSCM) to discuss the engagement and consultation process undertaken regarding the Burghead and Hopeman branch surgery premises; and
- iii. agrees the role of Glasgow School of Art in supporting General Practice visioning work within Moray.

12. Carefirst Replacement

The meeting had before it a report by the Chief Social Work Officer informing the Board of the requirement for a replacement Social Work services client based recording system.

Concern was raised by a number of members of the Board on how the replacement system would be funded.

In response the Chief Officer advised funding streams would be part of the scoping exercise which would be reported back to the Board.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed to:-

- i. note the requirement for a replacement Social Work services client based recording system; and
- ii. agree the initiation of a process to begin scoping a replacement system.

13. Reappointment of Chief Internal Auditor

The meeting had before it a report by the Chief Officer asking the Board to consider the reappointment of the Chief Internal Auditor, whose current terms of appointment are due to expire on 31 March 2024.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed to appoint Dafydd Lewis, Audit and Risk Manager, Moray Council, as the Chief Internal Auditor of the MIJB, for a further period of two years to 31 March 2026.

14. Reappointment of Standards Officer and Depute Standards Officer

The meeting had before it a report by the Chief Officer asking the Board to consider the reappointment of its Standards Officer and one Depute, whose current terms of appointment are due to expire on 1 April 2024.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed to:-

- i. formally nominate for approval by the Standards Commission, Alasdair McEachan, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Moray Council, as the Standards Officer of the MIJB, for a further period of two years until 1 April 2026;
- ii. formally nominate for approval by the Standards Commission, Aileen Scott, Legal Services Manager, Moray Council, for a further period of two years until 1 April 2026;
- iii. task the Chief Officer with writing to the Standards Commission with the relevant information; and
- iv. note that the arrangements will be reviewed period to April 2026.

15. Care for People Plan - Moray Arrangements

The meeting had before it a report by the Corporate Manager providing assurance to the Board that Health and Social Care Moray (HSCM) have developed an operational framework to deliver the Care for People Strategy.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed to:-

- i. note that a Care for People Operational Framework has been developed in conjunction with its partners, as set out in the operational document (Appendix A); and
- ii. note that continued improvement and implementation of the Care for People Plan is now business as usual.

16. Reserves Policy - Review

The meeting had before it a report by the Chief Financial Officer seeking approval from the Board on its reserves policy.

Following consideration the Board unanimously agreed:-

- i. to approve the Reserves Policy as at Appendix 1; and
- ii. that the next review will be no later than March 2025.

17. Budget Update and Financial Recovery Plan [Para 6.2.1]

The meeting had before it a report by the Chief Financial Officer providing the MIJB with a budget update in preparation for the 2024/25 financial year, along with a financial recovery action plan that begins to address the 2024/25 budget gap between income and expenditure.

Concern was raised by members of the Board that there was not enough information in the recovery plan for a decision to be made at the meeting as the proposed savings were not sufficiently radical or transformational to address the budget deficit as set out in the report.

The Chief Officer advised that a report on MIJB Scrutiny had been considered by Moray Council at their meeting on 24 January 2024. The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance confirmed that the purpose of the report was to provide Councillors with assurance and clarification of the Council's scrutiny arrangements and reporting arrangements for MIJB.

The Chair moved that a workshop be arranged with the Board and, if appropriate, community planning partners, to discuss detailed costed options including risks and for the outcomes from the workshop be reported back to Board for approval.

Following further lengthy consideration the Board unanimously agreed:-

- i. a workshop be held as soon as practicable to consider detailed and costed options with associated risks for transformational change to address the budget deficit; and

- ii. the outcomes from the workshop be reported back to the Board at the earliest opportunity for approval in order to set a balanced budget.



REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 22 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS FOR AN INTERIM AND SUBSEQUENT PERMANENT CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER/HEAD OF SERVICE

BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1. To recommend the proposed approach for recruiting an interim and permanent replacement for the outgoing Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO)/Head of Service of the Council which is a key statutory post in the Moray Health and Social Care Partnership.
- 1.2. The report is submitted to Council in terms of Section A (1) of the Scheme of Administration relating to the appointment of senior management posts at Head of Service Level.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- i) **agrees to delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive of the Council to appointment an Interim CSWO/Head of Service in consultation with the Interim Chief Executive of NHS Grampian, the Chair and Vice Chair of Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) to cover the period until the new permanent Chief Social Work Officer/Head of Service is recruited and takes up post (estimated to take approximately 6 months);**
- ii) **approves the progression of the recruitment process for the permanent CSWO/Head of Service post in accordance with current policy;**
- iii) **notes the indicative timeline for the recruitment and selection process for the permanent position; and**

iv) instructs the Interim Chief Executive of the Council to report back to the Council and MIJB on any interim appointment.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An extraordinary situation has occurred with both the MIJB Chief Officer and the CSWO/Head of Service leaving their respective roles at the same time.
- 3.2 The current Moray Health and Social Care Partnership's Chief Officer formally intimated that he will stand down from his role on health grounds and his tenure as Chief Officer will end on 31 May 2024.
- 3.3 Section 10 of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014, states that the MIJB is to appoint the Chief Officer and notes that it must consult with both the Council and NHS Grampian. The Moray Scheme of Integration (an agreement between the Council and NHS Grampian) states that the Chief Officer is an employee of the MIJB and therefore the recruitment to this post is their responsibility.
- 3.4 A joint report addressing the pressing issue of the recruitment, associated process and timescale for the MIJB Chief Officer post has been prepared by both the Interim Chief Executive of the Council and the Interim Chief Executive of NHS Grampian for consideration by the Board on 30 May 2024.
- 3.5 The current Moray Health and Social Care Partnership's CSWO/Head of Service formally submitted her resignation from the role which is effective from 17 June 2024. However, due to outstanding annual leave entitlement, her last day at work will also be 301 May 2024, albeit the current incumbent will retain the Chief Social Work Officer responsibility until 17 June 2024.
- 3.6 In addition to the CSWO duties, and as Head of Service, the post holder is responsible for leading the delivery of the following:
- Children and Families Social Work (including Children's Access Team)
 - Justice Social Work
 - Moray Youth Justice
 - Out of Hours Social Work
 - Contracts
 - Commissioning
 - Children's Services Networks
 - Public Protection
 - Child Health (Health Visiting and School Nursing)
- 3.7 Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 requires every local authority to appoint a professionally qualified Chief Social Work Officer and it is imperative that continuity of service is secured for this statutory post. The CSWO is an employee of the Council. However, there is insufficient time to

recruit a suitable permanent candidate prior to the current incumbent's departure, and the recruitment process for a permanent replacement is estimated to take approximately 6 months.

- 3.8 Therefore, in the meantime, alternative temporary arrangements are necessary to cover any potential gap in statutory provision. Accordingly, it is proposed that appropriate arrangements are put in place to recruit a suitably qualified and experienced interim CSWO prior to the end of May 2024.
- 3.9 The Council's current Scheme of Delegation deals with Acting Chief Officer Appointments, but it does not give the necessary delegated power to the Chief Executive to appoint an Interim CSWO or Head of Service, and as a result, formal Council approval is required to secure the appropriate delegation on this occasion.
- 3.10 It is proposed that a recruitment panel comprising the Chair, Vice Chair of MIJB, the Interim Chief Executive of the Council and the Interim Chief Executive of NHS Grampian (partner representative), the Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development is used for the recruitment of the Interim CSWO/Head of Service.
- 3.11 The recruitment process for the permanent CSWO/Head of Service will be progressed as quickly as practicable in accordance with the Council established policy and the permanent post will be advertised no later than June 2024.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) and Moray Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan "Partners in Care 2022-2032"

This report forms part of the governance arrangements of MIJB; good governance arrangements will support the Board to fulfil its objectives.

(b) Policy and Legal

The role of the Chief Social Work Officer is a statutory requirement. To fail to make plans to appoint an incumbent Chief Social Work Officer would result in non-compliance with the Section 3 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

The National Care Service Bill is currently being progressed and will bring further change to the Integration of Health and Social Care. The role and remit of the Chief Officer may be subject to review to ensure it meets the requirements of any future legislative change. Where this is necessary, the matter will be brought to the Council's and MIJB's attention.

- (c) Financial implications**
Marginal additional costs may occur because of interim market rates which are normally higher than the gross cost of permanent employees.
- (d) Risk Implications**
As with all recruitment, there is a risk that a suitable candidate may not be found. Ensuring a robust assessment of candidates provides assurance for the Council that candidates are sufficiently qualified, experienced and competent for the requirements of the role.
- (e) Staffing Implications**
There are no staffing implications arising from this report.
- (f) Property**
There are no property implications arising from this report.
- (g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**
An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required as there is no change to policy and procedures resulting from this report.
- (h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**
There are no climate change or biodiversity implications arising from this report.
- (i) Consultations**
Consultation on this report has taken place with The Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development who agrees with the content in relation to her area of responsibility. The following partners were also consulted in the writing of this report and views incorporated: Chair and Vice Chair of MIJB, Leader and Depute Leader of the Council and Interim Chief Executive of NHS Grampian

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This report provides a summary of key recruitment issues for the MIJB and the resulting need to recruit an Interim Chief Social Work Officer/Head of Service to ensure compliance with statute until a permanent replacement is appointed.**

Author of Report: John W Mundell OBE, Interim Chief Executive
Background Papers: [Health and Social Care Integration Scheme for Moray](#)

Ref: SPMAN-1108985784-965



REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 22 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: LEARNING ESTATE PROGRAMME UPDATE - FUTURE FORRES ACADEMY SITE SELECTION

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Council on the site selection for the Future Forres Academy new build project and seeks approval of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee's recommendation for preferred site.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (D) (17) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the School Estate to consider and make recommendations on capital and minor works programmes.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- i) note the outcome of the option appraisal by the design team regarding the location of a new school (Para 3.8-3.10);**
- ii) note the outcome of the public engagement regarding the location of a new school (Para 4.1- 4.3); and**
- iii) agree the recommendation of the Education, Children's and Leisure Service Committee on 14 May 2024 that the Applegrove/Roysvale Park option is the preferred site for the new school (Para 5.1 to 5.5**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following approval at the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 19 September 2023 (para 16 of the minute refers), a feasibility study to support Future Forres Academy Project was instructed and undertaken by Hub North Scotland supported by JM Architects, Goodson Associates (Civil and Structural Engineers, Rybka (Mechanical and Electrical Engineers), Currie and Brown (Quantity Surveyors), The Learning Crowd (Educationalists) and Ryder (Consultation). The final report is at **Appendix 1**.

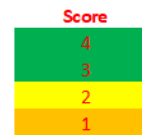
- 3.2 In addition to new build proposals, consideration was given to refurbishment of the current building. This would have entailed a significant cost and disruption to the school users over a 3 year period with all or a majority of the users required to be decanted into temporary school accommodation (in either the school car park and/or adjacent Roysvale common good land). The study concluded that a refurbishment option would not offer value for money and be unlikely to meet the aspirations of the local community. It was therefore decided to progress with a new build solution.
- 3.3 A further objective of the feasibility study was to complete an appraisal of three site options suitable for a new build school - (1) Applegrove/Roysvale (Central), (2) Lochyhill (East) and Granttown Road (South) - against fourteen factors weighted with respect to national policies that Moray Council are aligned with. This includes the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods, climate change and reducing carbon emissions policies. Overall project costs were not a factor considered at this stage. These initial 3 sites options are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Potential locations for Future Forres Academy

- 3.4 This scoring matrix and outcomes from the site appraisal are set out in the table below.
- 3.5 The outcome of the appraisal supported the decision to discount the Granttown site as a viable option. There were a number of factors contributing to this decision not least its edge of town location (both now and in the future), the presence of high pressure gas pipes, low voltage mains and services cables within the site boundary and the poor transport infrastructure to and around the site that to improve would incur significant cost.

Criteria	Weighting	Lochyhill		Apple grove /Roysvale		Forres - Grantown Road	
		Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
Context (scale, location, civic presence, opportunities for joining up services)	15	2	30	3	45	1	15
Place (SMART Objectives)	15	3	45	4	60	2	30
Transport (existing infrastructure, safer routes to schools, car parking)	10	1	10	3	30	1	10
Flood Risk	10	3	30	2	20	3	30
Sustainability (reuse of buildings)	5	1	5	2	10	1	5
Landscaping & Ecology (existing topography/ trees)	5	3	15	3	15	3	15
Planning Considerations (LDP, policies, settlement boundary, listed buildings, conservation areas)	5	3	15	3	15	2	10
Utility Infrastructure (drainage separate)	5	1	5	3	15	1	5
Underground Risks (non utility services, archaeology)	5	2	10	2	10	3	15
Construction (access, disruption, decant)	5	3	15	2	10	3	15
Orientation, massing and shading	5	3	15	2	10	3	15
Ground Conditions	5	3	15	3	15	3	15
Drainage	5	3	15	2	10	2	10
Future Expansion	5	4	20	2	10	4	20
Total	100		245		275		210
Ranking			2		1		3



Fully Delivers
Mostly Delivers
Delivers to a Limited Extent
Does not Deliver

Site Appraisal Scoring Matrix

- 3.6 It should be noted that for the design team appraisal, 30% of the score was shared between the Context and Place criteria. This took account of the key national and local strategies and policies as defined in [National Planning Framework 4](#) and [Moray Local Development Plan 2020](#) and adopted by Moray to improve people's lives by making sustainable, liveable and productive spaces. These support 20 minute neighbourhoods, reducing car-based and maximising active travel journeys and town centre economic sustainability. It was the two key criteria of Context and Place that favoured the central location of the Applegrove/Roysvale site and scored it higher than the Lochyhill situated on the eastern boundary of the town.
- 3.7 In terms of the other criteria both sites scored equally overall – with some criteria favouring a Lochyhill site over an Applegrove/Roysvale site and vice versa. Both sites were considered viable options for a new build development, with the differences between them, considered within the selection criteria, viewed as design challenges and/or project risks and issues and not indicators of non-viability. The following is noted as key supporting information in determining a preferred site for construction:

Lochyhill

- Supports a design solution that would incorporate a new build secondary school constructed with an associated 3G pitch and car park on site;
- Provides minimal design constraints and meets the education strategic objectives;
- Would not meet the Moray place-based policy.
- Would see the current school demolished with the exception of the swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool and fitness suite which would remain as a standalone self-sufficient asset;
- Delivers an affordable design within an area of 5.8 hectares (58,000 sqm). This would not support a requirement for future expansion - further land would need to be acquired to facilitate this;
- The site is not Council owned and would need to be purchased from the current landowners – at market rate for development land;
- Limited flooding risk given the lower groundwater table supporting a simpler groundworks design;
- Site drainage not complex on site but would still require works to connect to Forres Waste Water Treatment site to the west;
- Requires the development of new safer routes to school;
- Does not provide an opportunity to develop a 5-18 campus model with existing primary school;
- Requires road improvements including potential requirement for a new roundabout on the A96 to provide overall site access from the school and future residential site;
- Improvement and upgrade to site utility connections to meet increased demand; and
- Could impact local businesses due to edge of town location.

Applegrove/Roysvale Park

- Supports a design solution that would incorporate a new build secondary school and accessible parking constructed on the new site together with the retention and improvement of the majority of current Roysvale Park playfields and repurposing of existing school site to accommodate a 3G pitch, main car park and soft landscaping;
- Meets the educational strategic objectives and place-based policy
- Would see the current school demolished with the exception of the swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool and fitness suite which would remain as a standalone self-sufficient asset and the current school site redeveloped with a 3G pitch and car park;
- The Council owns the site for new school building;
- Plans for the bus drop off and playing fields are on inalienable common good land. Its appropriation would require legal consent following a statutory consultation;
- Would maintain the majority of the common good as green space for community use with mitigations planned to improve current surface water drainage issues;
- Options to use or improve existing safe routes to school;
- Opportunity to develop a 5-18 campus with adjacency of existing primary school with benefits of shared management, curriculum and pastoral transition (mainstream and ASN), shared PEF investment and access to extended learning for primary
- Supports a pedestrian priority campus with a dedicated bus/coach drop off which would avoid road congestion;
- Provides a central location for the school with a good opportunity for a united civic presence;
- Provides links to other existing green/health and wellbeing spaces providing both educational and community benefit; and,
- Provides good opportunities for educational links during construction and maintains the economic benefits to the surrounding businesses.

3.8 The options for 'future proofing' have been considered within the options appraisal with Lochyhill scoring higher than the Applegrove/Roysvale site. This accounted for the fact that more land is currently available on the Lochyhill site as there was no existing residential property constraints. This will change should residential development progress in the future in accordance with the Local Development Plan (LDP). However, there is no allowance for this within the planned site footprint or the associated additional land acquisition costs. School roll forecasts indicate that even with a 100% increase on current maximum forecast housing output rate over the next 15 years (equating to 1600 new houses) the planned school capacity will be more than adequate and no extension is foreseen. Should the situation change there is provision within the current LDP for land to be available for a new primary school on the wider Lochyhill development site which would allow the Applegrove site to be considered for any future expansion of the new Forres Academy.

3.9 The Applegrove/Roysvale site is owned and administered by Moray Council while Lochyhill is privately owned. The Council would need to formally acquire

the Lochyhill site land at market value in order to develop on it. However, a major area of the Applegrove/Roysvale site is classed as inalienable Common Good and hence the Council would need to remove the constraints this imposes to allow a main contractor to commence works on site in accordance with the programme.

- 3.10 The current intended use of Common Good land is as temporary construction site access, laydown and project ‘life support’ area for the duration of the construction project (estimated around 32 months). This same area would be improved to support long term use as a green playing field site within the final school design. In addition, it is intended that a 12m landstrip adjacent to the Sanquhar Road would be repurposed and developed as a bus drop off lane. There are other viable design options that could be considered as alternatives to the Common Good for this purpose (within the proposed new car park or on Burdsyard Road to the south of the site), and although these would be further from the new school building.
- 3.11 The feasibility report concludes that if the Council is confident that the Common Good constraint can be removed prior to the planned start of construction on site (programmed for July 2025) then the recommendation, based on all the selection criteria considered, is that the Applegrove/Roysvale site would offer the best option for Moray Council to deliver a new build school.
- 3.12 Currie and Brown prepared high level cost models for each of the 3 sites as part of the feasibility study. The estimated construction costs for each site option have not been provided within this report due to their commercial sensitivity; however, a comparison of additional authority costs is provided in the table below. The additional cost to develop the Lochyhill site and anticipated off site works is estimated at £3,372,300 above that for the Applegrove/Roysvale site.

Site Option	Authority Costs	Detail
Applegrove/Roysvale	£4,286,500	Design and project risk allowance, legal costs/fees, IT equipment, furniture
Lochyhill	£7,658,800	As above + Off site works: cost of land for development, improvement to access roads (including A96) and active travel routes, and improvements and upgrades to site utilities (water, drainage, electricity).

- 3.13 Given the future importance of the site selection to young people, parents/carers and residents of Forres, it was agreed at the Special Education, Children’s and Leisure Services Committee on 27 March 2024 (para 5 of the minute refers), to undertake a public engagement on the location for the new Forres Academy, with two site options, Lochyhill and Applegrove/Roysvale Park, presented.

- 3.14 The public engagement was completed between 28 March - 25 April 2024 with the objective to share site information that was available and seek views on the location for the Forres Academy new build. It consisted of: an online survey and an equivalent paper version (available from the Forres Post Office and Forres Library); an information session for Forres Academy staff and pupils held on 17 April 2024; and a community drop in session held on 18 April 2024 at Forres Town Hall. A copy of the online/paper survey is at **Appendix 2.**

4. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1 The output from the public engagement online survey is summarised below with more detail analysis provided at **Appendix 3;**

- A total of 1,191 online survey submissions were received;
- The overall breakdown is 54.7% to 45.3% preference for the Lochyhill site;
- 330 respondees identified as a parent/carer of a child attending school – the breakdown within this group was 52.1% to 47.9% in favour of the Applegrove/Roysvale site;
- 518 respondees were from the Applegrove PS catchment where Applegrove/Roysvale site is located – the breakdown within this group was 62% to 38% preference for the Lochyhill site;
- 951 respondees were from within the Forres town boundary (Applegrove, Andersons and Pilmuir Primary School catchments) – the breakdown of these was 53.9% to 46.1% preference for the Lochyhill site; and,
- The total size of the respondee groups encompassing Primary and Secondary school pupils and staff was 131 – only the primary school pupil group (39 respondees) preferred the Applegrove/Roysvale site (59% to 41%). The remaining secondary school pupils (51 respondees) had a preference for the Lochyhill site (57%) over Applegrove/Roysvale (43%) and similarly the staff (41 respondees) were in favour of Lochyhill (63%) over Applegrove (37%)

- 4.2 The output from the public engagement paper survey is summarised below with more detailed analysis provided at **Appendix 4:**

- A total of 89 paper surveys were received;
- The preference was 85% for the Lochyhill site;

A significant number of paper surveys were completed within the last week of the engagement and there is clear evidence of multiple surveys with identical content which could call into the question the validity of the results.

- 4.3 During the Public Engagement process a number of questions, queries and observations were submitted with respect to both sites. These were received within the survey responses, as direct e-mail correspondence to the Council and during the in person engagements. These were collated into key themes and responses provided in the form of Frequently Asked Questions list. These can be found on the Moray Council website at

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_151261.html . The Learning Estate team will continue to update FAQs as the new school design and project progress.

5. PREFERRED SITE SELECTION

- 5.1 In determination of the preferred site for new build Future Forres Academy a number of factors, and the risk and issues associated with these, were considered.
- 5.2 The feasibility report acknowledges there are a number of issues and risks associated with developing either of the 2 sites. The technical risks have been identified and the civil and structure engineers appointed to the design team have considered robust mitigation strategies that will be confirmed during the concept design stage. The construction project costs have incorporated a related risk contingency factor for both sites. Therefore the key remaining site differentiators relate to land ownership status.
- 5.3 The feasibility report conclusion is that if the Council are able to gain consent to use the Common Good then the Applegrove/Roysvale site is the best option for a new build school. The common good land transaction would require the consent of the Sheriff Court following a Public Consultation and due consideration by the Council. The outcome of the public consultation will be an influential consideration but the whole perspective on all of the process followed and issues, including any improvements to the site for the benefit of the community will be considered. If the Court was to reject the application the Council would need to purchase an alternative piece of land, which would increase the project delivery timescales. This is an important consideration in the context of the current condition of the Forres Academy building. Currently an allowance of 6 months has been incorporated into the project plan timeline. If consent is not forthcoming, and the Council need to pursue an alternate site (Lochyhill) then this would incur a 6 month delay to the project (moving the operational date from January 2028 to July 2028).
- 5.4 With the Lochyhill site the Council would need to acquire the development land at market rate and accept that the project costs would increase to near £4m to cover this acquisition and significant off site development costs and additional construction costs.
- 5.5 Although there is a risk that the Council will not gain legal consent for any use or development of the Roysvale site and this will result in a minimum 6 month delay while an alternate site is proposed (Lochyhill would be the alternate), There may be other options on the use of the site that would remove or significantly reduce that risk and this is being considered. There are a number of reasons to support the selection of the Applegrove/Roysvale site, summarised as:
- Central location better meets the place-based and strategic context requirements for a new community school, aligning with the NPF4 and

Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy – Connecting People, Places and Learning guidance and principles;

- More cost effective option at a time when the current and future challenges on the Council capital budget are significant;
- Retains flexibility to respond to future school roll growth if required as the Lochyhill site is identified for a primary school;
- Offers educational benefits of a 5-18 campus - with adjacency of existing primary school with benefits of shared management, curriculum and pastoral transition (mainstream and ASN), shared PEF investment and access to extended learning for primary; and
- Benefit of the improvement of the Roysvale land and drainage improvement to improve community use of the green space/playing fields for the future.

5.6 The Applegrove/Roysvale site was proposed as the preferred development site for the new school at the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 14 May 2024 and the Committee agreed to recommend to Council for approval.

6. **NEXT STEPS**

6.1 The proposed next steps are dependent on the Council decision on 22 May 2024. It would be to either:

A. Lochyhill: Consult regarding the relocation of the school in accordance with the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 and engage in discussion over acquisition of the private land or;

B. Applegrove/Roysvale - consult the public regarding the Common Good use to support school construction for the duration of the project and for permanent development of bus drop off areas.

6.2 Should the Council agree the recommendation that the Applegrove/Roysvale is the preferred site and the consent to use the Common Good ground is not forthcoming the only viable alternate for a new build be the Lochyhill. Therefore it is prudent for the Council to continue to consider Lochyhill as a potential future site and engage in discussion over acquisition of the land

6.3 In parallel with the site selection activity the project will also be progressing with consultation on the concept design for the new school over the next 6 months.

7 **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

This report supports the aims of the Corporate Plan to:

- **Build thriving, resilient, empowered communities:** Learning estate fit for the future and financially sustainable - tackle the

affordability and standard of our learning estate to ensure sustainability while meeting climate requirements.

and supports the LOIP outcomes:

- Building a better future for children and young people in Moray; and,
- Empowering and connecting communities.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Lochyhill site is outside the current school boundary and therefore consultation regarding the relocation of the school in accordance with the Schools (Consultation)(Scotland) Act 2010 would require to be undertaken.

Roysvale Park is categorised as inalienable Common Good and if it is not possible to progress an alternative site layout that avoids long term use of the common good land, the Council would require to obtain consent of the Sheriff Court in terms of the Section 75(2) Local Government (Scotland) Act to appropriate the land. Section 222(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires the Council to have regard to the interests of the inhabitants of the former Burgh of Forres when administering Common Good land.

In addition, Section 104 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which came into force on 27 June 2018, requires that before taking any decision to appropriate a Common Good asset, the Council must publish details about the proposed disposal. In publishing these details, the Council must also:

- (i) notify the relevant community council and any community body that is known to have an interest in the property; and
- (ii) invite those bodies to make representations in respect of the proposals.

In deciding whether or not to appropriate the land, the Council must have regard to any representations made, whether by those invited or by some other relevant party. The proposal, along with the summary of any representations received, would then form the basis of a further report to this Committee to allow it to make a decision regarding the appropriation of the site and submission for court approval.

(c) Financial implications

The short term financial implications of the site selection have been addressed within the report.

Although the project will receive outcome based revenue funding from the Scottish Government through Phase 3 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) this is calculated against the project construction costs and does not take account of any Authority Costs

outwith this which would include a site acquisition and off site development costs.

(d) Risk Implications

The majority of risks are already covered within the report. The key risk is related to project timing delay (and associated inflationary pressures) and apply to both site options.

Applegrove/ Roysvale

A currently allowance of 6 months has been incorporated into the project plan timeline for the Applegrove/Roysvale site. If the legal consent to use Common Good land is refused, the Council need to pursue an alternate site (Lochyhill). This would incur a further 6 month delay to the project (moving the operational date from January 2028 to July 2028).

As discussed earlier in the report the risk of non-consent could be reduced if the final design seeks to minimise or remove the requirement to permanently repurpose and develop the land strip adjacent to Sanquhar Road.

Lochyhill

The Council would need to negotiate the acquisition of the site from the current owner. There is a risk that the owner would be unwilling to sell, or that the price sought would not meet affordability criteria. With similar situations in other projects the Council has promoted a compulsory purchase order (CPO) in tandem with landowner negotiations. As part of the CPO process the Council would need to justify its requirement for that particular site (with reference to alternatives) and 18 months minimum would need to be allowed for this process (moving the operational date from January 2028 - with current 6 month contingency - to January 2029).

Early engagement with the current landowner is required to fully determine the likelihood of this.

(e) Staffing Implications

The requirement to undertake a form of statutory consultation on either site selection option will result in a 3-6 month increase in workload that may require external support to ensure project timescales are met. A legal cost factor has been included in the cost model.

(f) Property

The property implications are set out in the body of the report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The quality of the learning environment can impact on learning and attainment by as much as 16%. The condition and suitability of our learning estate, and capacity challenges associated with both growth and population decline in some areas, give rise to unequal opportunity across Moray.

This proposal supports the Learning Estate Strategy requirement that all Learning Estate buildings meet minimum standards and are fit for purpose.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

Whichever site is chosen there will be a requirement to consider embodied carbon within construction and whole life operational carbon generated. The scale of this overall impact will be assessed in detail as the project progresses to full business case and this will be balanced against the current operational carbon budgets. The LEIP 3 standards for both operational carbon (energy efficiency) and embodied carbon require the new build design to minimise carbon. A whole life carbon assessment and community wealth building statement will be provided during the planning application stage.

(i) Consultations

The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Chief Financial Officer, Acting Head of Economic Growth and Development, Equal Opportunities Officer and Democratic Services Manager have been consulted and the comments received have been incorporated into the report.

8 CONCLUSION

8.3 The Council is requested to agree the recommendations of the Education, Children's and Leisure Service Committee on 14 May 2024 that the Applegrove/Roysvale site be the preferred development site for the Future Forres Academy new build. In supporting that decision they are asked to consider the findings of the project feasibility report and the outputs from the public engagement on the 2 site options. Thereafter, a statutory consultation, dependent on the site selected and any alternative options as set out in the report will commence.

Authors of Report: Shona Leese, Senior Project Officer (Learning Estate)
Andy Hall, Programme Manager (Learning Estate)

Appendices:

1. SSPS Project Feasibility Report
2. Public Engagement Survey
3. Online Survey Results
4. Paper Survey Results

Background Papers:

- SSPS Report Appendix A - Consultation
- SSPS Report Appendix B - Brief
- SSPS Report Appendix C - Utilities
- SSPS Report Appendix D - Engineering
- SSPS Report Appendix E - Site Investigations

SSPS Report Appendix F - Site Appraisal
SSPS Report Appendix G -Energy Carbon
SSPS Report Appendix H – Programme
SSPS Report Appendix J – Cost (Commercially sensitive) – available to Councillors
on request

Ref: SPMAN-9425411-360

FORRES ACADEMY

MORAY COUNCIL

“WRAPPING A BUILDING AROUND YOUR COMMUNITY”



SSPS PHASE A & B REPORT | FEBRUARY 2024

FORRES ACADEMY

MORAY COUNCIL AND HUB NORTH SCOTLAND

Project: FORRES ACADEMY
Project Code: FOR
Project Number: 7118
Document Title: SSPS Phase A & B Report
File Name: FOR-JMA-XX-XX-T-A-000001
Revision: P02
Date: FEBRUARY 2024

jmarchitects

64 Queen Street
Edinburgh, EH2 4NA
edinburgh@jmarchitects.net
t 0131 464 6100

www.jmarchitects.net
info@jmarchitects.net

Executive Summary

This document has been prepared by jmarchitects in conjunction with Hub North Scotland Ltd., Currie and Brown, Goodson Associates, Rybka, Ryder Architecture and The Learning Crowd on behalf of Moray Council to summarise the Strategic Support Partnering Service (SSPS) Phase A and B work undertaken to date on the development of the vision for a new Forres Academy.

Over the course of the last four months the project team have worked closely with Moray Council, Forres Academy and the wider community to develop this vision which has built upon initial work undertaken as part of the pitch book authoring for the Scottish Future's Trust LEIP Phase 3 funding bid.

This document seeks to outline the SSPS Phase A and B work; visioning and strategy definition, existing information analysis, development of education briefing, lessons learnt analysis, desktop appraisal of site options, site option appraisals and recommendations as well as proposed development programme and cost plan.



Existing Forres Academy

The Team



Participant and Authority Client
Moray Council - Education Department
Moray Council Office
High Street
Elgin
IV30 1BX



Delivery Partner
hub North Scotland
Enerco House
18 Albert St,
Aberdeen
AB25 1XG



Architect
jmarchitects
64 Queen Street,
Edinburgh
EH2 4NA



Civil and Structural Engineer
Goodson Associates
46 Carden Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1UP



Mechanical & Electrical Engineer
Rybka
24 Rutland Street
Edinburgh
EH1 2AN



Quantity Surveyor
Currie & Brown
Onyx
215 Bothwell Street
Glasgow
G2 7EZ



Landscape Architect
Ryder Architecture
Cooper's Studios
14-18 Westgate Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 3NN



Educationalist
The Learning Crowd
9 Hemdean Road
Caversham
Reading
RG4 7SY



Consultation Specialist
Ryder Architecture
Cooper's Studios
14-18 Westgate Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 3NN

Contents

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Need
- 1.2 The Response
- 1.3 The Conversation
- 1.4 The Brief
- 1.5 Lessons Learned
- 1.6 Strategic Options

2.0 Place

- 2.1 Forres
- 2.2 A Place Specific Vision
- 2.3 Local Development Plan
- 2.4 Place Based Review
- 2.5 The Existing Site
- 2.6 Potential Locations For A New Community Hub

3.0 Roysvale Park

- 3.1 Location Overview
- 3.2 Historical Analysis
- 3.3 Photographic Survey
- 3.4 20 Minute Neighbourhood
- 3.5 Existing Utilities
- 3.6 Engineering Review
- 3.7 Existing Land Use
- 3.8 Opportunities
- 3.9 Constraints

4.0 Lochyhill / Enterprise Park

- 4.1 Location Overview
- 4.2 Historical Analysis
- 4.3 Photographic Survey
- 4.4 20 Minute Neighbourhood
- 4.5 Existing Utilities
- 4.6 Engineering Review
- 4.7 Existing Land Use
- 4.8 Opportunities
- 4.9 Constraints

5.0 Grantown Road

- 5.1 Location Overview
- 5.2 Historical Analysis
- 5.3 Photographic Survey
- 5.4 20 Minute Neighbourhood
- 5.5 Existing Utilities
- 5.6 Engineering Review
- 5.7 Existing Land Use
- 5.8 Opportunities
- 5.9 Constraints

6.0 Site Location Appraisal

- 6.1 Site Appraisal

7.0 Forres Academy Current Site

- 7.1 Location Overview
- 7.2 Historical Analysis
- 7.3 Site Analysis
- 7.4 Existing Building
- 7.5 Existing Utilities

8.0 New Proposal Site Layout Options

- 8.1 Roysvale Park - Long List Site Organisation Options
- 8.2 Roysvale Park - Developed Site Organisation Option 1a
- 8.3 Roysvale Park - Developed Site Organisation Option 1b
- 8.4 Roysvale Park - Developed Site Organisation Option 3
- 8.5 Lochyhill / Enterprise Park - Developed Site Organisation Option
- 8.6 Grantown Road - Developed Site Organisation Option

9.0 Mechanical and Electrical

- 9.1 Energy and Carbon Strategy
- 9.2 Mechanical and Electrical Design Strategy

10.0 Structural and Civil

- 10.1 Structural Strategy
- 10.2 Civil Strategy

11.0 Programme

- 11.1 Programme Commentary

12.0 Cost Appraisal

- 12.1 Cost Commentary

13.0 Recommendations and Next Steps

- 13.1 Recommendations
- 13.2 Next Steps

14.0 Appendices

Appendix A - Consultation Summary

Appendix B - The Education Brief, Adjacencies & Schedule of Accommodation

Appendix C - Existing Utilities Report

Appendix D - High Level Site Constraints Report

Appendix E - Site Investigations Report

Appendix F - Site Appraisals Assessment

Appendix G - Energy & Carbon Strategy

Appendix H - Programme

Appendix J - Cost Appraisal

1.0 INTRODUCTION



1.1 The Need

The Strategic Fit

There is evidence that attainment and post-school destinations vary across Moray communities and in some areas are below average. Investment in the learning estate will respond to these issues and support the aspirations of the wider community. The Moray Council Learning Estate Strategy 2022-2032 aligns with the local priorities set out within the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and the Moray Council Corporate Plan. A future school will align with what is expected of infrastructure for the future and offer sustainability for both the asset and communities they serve; enabling multi-organisational working to ensure that public services are joined up and resources are used most effectively.

Existing Condition and Suitability

Following the criteria outlined by the Scottish Government's Condition Core Facts Survey, Forres Academy was assessed as overall Condition D – life-expired and/or at serious risk of imminent failure. There is a trend of increasing reactive maintenance spend on the existing asset and a rising sum of investment required to make much needed fabric improvement. Considerable sums have already been spent over the last few years and these have only maintained the low condition ratings and indeed not prevented further deterioration in condition.

The current Forres Academy, which originally opened in 1969, was designed for an earlier approach to educational provision and no longer reflects the needs of the community for the integration of education, skills and jobs that will support long-term resilience and sustainability.

The continued drain on resource to simply maintain the current Forres Academy at low condition and suitability standards is unsustainable.

RAAC

Following updated guidance regarding reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) from the UK Government in late 2022 Moray Council conducted desktop reviews of their whole building estate, including 54 schools. This progressed to a physical investigation in a number of buildings over the summer of 2023, which confirmed that there was RAAC present in the flat roof structure of Forres Academy.



1.2 The Response

In November 2022 Moray Council announced that Forres Academy was listed as its priority school to receive the Scottish Government Learning Estate Improvement Programme (LEIP) 3 funding. Consultation and engagement work was undertaken to prepare a 'pitch book' outlining the strategic case for funding for a new Forres Academy and the Scottish Government indicated that they would consider LEIP 3 funding bids with RAAC in mind.

Moray Council's Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee decided on Tuesday 19th September 2023 to progress Forres Academy quicker by accelerating the Outline Business Case approval and to bring in external consultants ('the project team') to move the initial stages on to be as ready as possible when any funding announcement is made.

On 30th October 2023 the Scottish Government confirmed that the funding bid for a replacement Forres Academy had been successful.

Over the course of the last four months the project team have worked closely with Moray Council, Forres Academy and the wider community to develop a vision which has built upon the initial work undertaken as part of the pitch book authoring.



1.3 The Conversation

Design Charrettes

As part of the engagement programme for Forres Academy, two sets of design charrettes were held on 4th and 14th December 2023. Charrettes are a collaborative and hands-on way to engage with stakeholders who may not have decision-making influence over a project, but often have a wealth of knowledge, interest and enthusiasm as they represent the end users of the building and/or the wider community in which it is set.

Our charrettes were attended by three groups: staff from the existing school; pupils from the existing school; and community / elected members including parents and carers of current pupils. On the first day, each group was given an overview of the project context before completing exercises focusing on shared and large spaces, such as the grounds and approach to the school, sports facilities, dining, assembly and drama. Each group lasted approximately one hour.

The second charrette was attended by staff and pupils only, as it focused on core spaces such as classrooms, breakout space, circulation and flexible working spaces, which are not typically accessed by members of the public.

The methodology was consistent across each charrette. Attendees were split into small groups of around five to eight people, and a member of the client or design team sat with each group to facilitate discussion and take notes. The groups were presented with precedent images from existing schools, each page addressing a different type of space, and were invited to put coloured dots on the images to indicate their likes and dislikes. This was used as a prompt for further discussion to capture qualitative feedback on what could work in the new school, and what may not work so well.

It also gave the team an opportunity to ask why people held certain preferences – for example: personal preference / taste; concerns about safety, capacity, functionality, etc; or simply being presented with something new or different that may take time to get used to. This helps to assess the feedback in more depth and understand more about the aspirations and culture of the school.

Key themes included:

- Safe access routes to the school for pedestrians, reduced congestion from cars and buses, and supporting active travel where possible
- A well-defined entrance which clearly displays the name of the school, and has sufficient width to avoid bottlenecks at the start and end of the day
- Shelter, seating and activity space to make the most of the outdoors
- Larger spaces such as assembly, performance and dining should work hard and be multi purpose / flexible where possible. However, the design should ensure that flexibility, noise and adjacent circulation spaces do not distract from their function
- The school should be welcoming, light and bright, accessible and inclusive
- Sports provision should be a community asset, offering a range of sports and the ability to use facilities out of school hours
- Whilst pupils are not encouraged to loiter in the school during lunch and breaks, there is a desire for more social spaces and areas where both staff and pupils can relax or work in comfort
- Classrooms and breakout spaces should be as bright and spacious as possible, with good storage. There is a desire for robust furniture that will not easily break

- In spaces used for flexible working, breakout and socialising, attendees strongly favoured images showing different types of furniture which could support a variety of learning styles and types of work. This includes quiet / individual spaces or small booths through to larger spaces for collaborative work in bigger groups

A full report of the charrette findings, including key themes and feedback from each group on each space type, is included in Appendix A.

Partner Survey

In December 2023/ January 2024, a short online survey was sent to potential partners who may wish to use working space or community facilities in the school, to begin dialogue about what their requirements may be. To date, four responses have been received from Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS Grampian (x2) and Police Scotland. There has been a request for space from the latter two services, including dedicated space, drop-in desks, collaboration space, meeting rooms and a treatment room for the nurse when visiting. Other considerations include the ability to have confidential meetings / calls, secure storage and parking for operational vehicles. For partners, the benefits of shared facilities include being more visible and available to pupils and the community, and more joint working opportunities with other partners to improve service delivery overall.



1.4 The Brief

The Education Design Brief sets out the proposal for a new building for Forres Academy. The 'Learning Village' will provide high quality, flexible and future-proofed spaces for 1200 pupils and 40 ASN pupils in a non-denominational six year secondary school. The total proposed GIFA for the project is 14,520m².

The term 'Learning Village' is used here to show that this is a new type of campus that is designed specifically to a set of agreed Moray Council principles that will maximise the use of the learning estate now and in the future.

The brief demonstrates how the project will deliver national and local priorities, in particular :

- National Policy including the Learning Estates Strategy and National Improvement Framework;
- Moray Council Learning Estate Strategy 2022-2032; and
- The Forres Academy Vision, Values and Aims.

The Education Design Brief has been developed closely with Moray Council and Forres Academy Senior Leaders and involved engagement with school stakeholders including staff, pupils, parents and community representatives. It takes account of their aspirations but is grounded in ensuring the project :

- Delivers the Scottish Futures Trust Space Standards and is within cost metrics for a project of this size;
- Sets clear Strategic Objectives and success measures that provide a framework for delivery and for monitoring impact;

- Takes account of the school context in terms of curriculum, ways of working, pastoral care and additional needs, partner services and community use. At the same time, it ensures flexibility and future-proofing to meet long term needs; and
- Has a set of overarching education design objectives that will translate into agreed adjacencies and an accommodation schedule that ensure clarity about the purpose and requirements of the spaces.

It also draws on Post Occupancy Evaluations of recent Moray Council education projects at Lossiemouth High School and Elgin High School and from visits to other new community schools.

The Education Design Brief and proposed Schedule of Accommodation can be found in Appendix B.



1.5 Lessons Learned

A “Lessons Learned” workshop was held on 25 October 2023 (Lossiemouth, Elgin High School + Linkwood Lessons Learned Summary Paper was referenced), and those attending the workshop talked about experiences learned from construction projects in general, and not just specific schools. From the workshop, a number of key points were raised and discussed which are summarised below:

- The requirement to do Site Investigation works at the earliest opportunity was discussed.
- It is important to get early FM involvement – the internal team from MC needs to be signed up to the project early on, in design stages as well as in construction.
- Pitched roofs would be preferable to flat roofs where possible/applicable albeit it is understood that it is not always the more cost-effective solution.
- Design to minimise damage caused by seagulls on flat roofs and in particular protecting exposed insulation on pipework or similar.
- Careful design is required whereby access to ceiling voids is required to make sure a robust solution is put in place, especially where regular maintenance inspections required, in corridors for instance.
- There is a preference not to have ceiling tiles in classrooms.
- Exposed trunking is probably the best solution for IT/electrical outlets within classrooms however vertical drops should be kept to a minimum.
- When designing lamps/lighting in atrium’s, consideration should be given as to how maintenance is to be carried out and where possible avoiding the use of scissor lifts.
- An important appointment pre contract is the Tier 1 Design Manager, and preferably someone with experienced in education projects should

be appointed where possible.

- Any Value Engineering changes required should be fully broken down to allow evaluation/scrutiny by the Cost Manager
- Any VE changes that are proposed should consider all long-term considerations for the participant particularly in terms of ongoing maintenance requirements.
- There is continued debate whether MVHR units in classrooms is a preferable solution opposed to centralised plant. Careful consideration is required as to the long-term maintenance requirements and not just initial capital costs, and full consideration of associated costs needs to be scrutinised including increasing building heights, increased GIFA for service risers etc. Participant/FM team need to be consulted also.
- FF&E coordination required to ensure account taken of items such as surface mounted pipe drops or surface mounted conduit etc. Consider use of independent FF&E consultant as part of design team.
- Window opening systems need to be carefully designed and also take account of potential furniture layouts that might affect access.
- Care is needed with RDD reviews as this needs to occur before Financial Close where possible.
- Clarity is required as to what elements of M&E are CDP and what is M&E consultant designed.
- A careful review of the benefits versus costs of “fibre to the room” is recommended.
- Early engagement with insurers “Zurich” is recommended to obtain clarity on the final specification of sprinkler heads within classrooms and what protection is required.
- Careful programming is needed at tender package reviews stage to ensure adequate time is allocated for fully assessing tender returns and reviewing alternative solutions.
- Market testing period in programme needs to be sufficient to allow Tier 1 risk allocation to be

reduced if appropriate.

- Tier 1 supply chain needs to be thoroughly tested at Tier 1 interview stage.
- ACR’s require thorough review including aspects including adjacencies for instance.
- Consideration should be given early on in the design process as to what public (community use) access required, and to which parts of the building to assist in design of access control, security strategy, lockdown strategy and CCTV monitoring.
- There does not seem to be a standard approach within Scottish schools as to the design/layout of WC’s; consideration should therefore be given to reviewing new schools that are constructed and in operation to see which layouts function best.
- Head Teacher involvement in school design is welcome and necessary however consideration should also be given to layouts generally on newly built schools to see what functions and layouts work well.
- Design and specification to mitigate wall scuffs (shoes/heels as well as bags), corner protection to be carried out pre contract, including anti-graffiti material specification.
- Colours for interior design is subjective, however participant should review other newly built schools for inspiration.
- Flexibility for future changes in partitions should be considered at design stage including potential for including mullions at strategic points within the frame.
- Car parking needs to take account of potential community use as well as day to day school use.

A number of the above points raised suggested that much could be learned from visiting newly built school projects. To this extent, jmarchitects were able to assist representatives from Moray Council on a number of site visits to new schools in the

Central Belt giving the participant the opportunities to consider alternative design solutions to some of the points raised in the above. The following schools were visited on 20th and 21st November 2023:

- Jedburgh Intergenerational Campus
- Castlebrae Community Campus
- Wallyford Learning Campus



Elgin High School



Lossiemouth High School

1.6 Strategic Options

In addition to the new build design proposals contained within this SSPS Report, Moray Council also explored the following two options in relation to the existing Forres Academy building: 'do nothing' and 'refurbish and extend'.

'Do Nothing'

The Forres Academy building is assessed as overall Condition D – life-expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure. The current school was designed for an earlier approach to educational provision and no longer reflects the needs of the community for the integration of education, skills and jobs that will support long-term resilience and sustainability. There is a trend of increasing reactive maintenance spend on the existing building and a rising sum of investment required to make much needed fabric improvements.

Considerable sums have already been spent over the last few years and these have only maintained the low condition ratings and indeed not prevented further deterioration in condition. The continued drain on resources to simply maintain the current Forres Academy at low condition and suitability standards is unsustainable.

Refurbish and Extend

Moray Council commissioned a high-level appraisal of Forres Academy in 2023 to ascertain whether it would be practicable and cost effective to refurbish and extend the existing school building. As part of this exercise several key criteria were considered including: the existing condition of the school premises; LEIP 3 compliance; any challenges that a refurbishment scenario may present including functionality and quality issues; whole life carbon; and cost implications. Whilst a refurbishment scenario can meet a number

of the LEIP 3 requirements, two issues present significant if not insurmountable challenges; the existing span between the structural floor slabs (which is significantly less than in modern education facilities) would pose a challenge with the mechanical ventilation required to meet LEIP 3 as well as the probable requirements to insulate under the existing ground floor slab.

Based on benchmark data the construction cost to refurbish a school is generally around 90% of the cost of a new build however the additional costs pertaining to the Forres Academy project, such as temporary accommodation for decant, the extent of RAAC and concerns over fire engineering would mean that the cost for delivering a refurbished Forres Academy would be likely to exceed the cost for delivering a new build Forres Academy with the risk that the final building could be compromised in some aspects.

Conclusion

One of Moray Council's learning estate strategy aspiration and key drivers is that "All learners to be educated in high quality buildings (minimum level B for condition and suitability)" given the financial challenge of simply maintaining the existing building without ever being able to improve its condition it would not be acceptable to 'do nothing' at Forres Academy. When consideration is taken of a compromised design solution that may have to be accepted for a refurbished school in comparison to a new build without any cost benefit, it was concluded that a refurbishment solution would not offer good value for money to Moray Council and the end product would unlikely meet the aspirations of the local community. It was therefore decided that Moray Council would proceed with a new build solution for the replacement Forres Academy.



Existing Forres Academy

2.0 PLACE

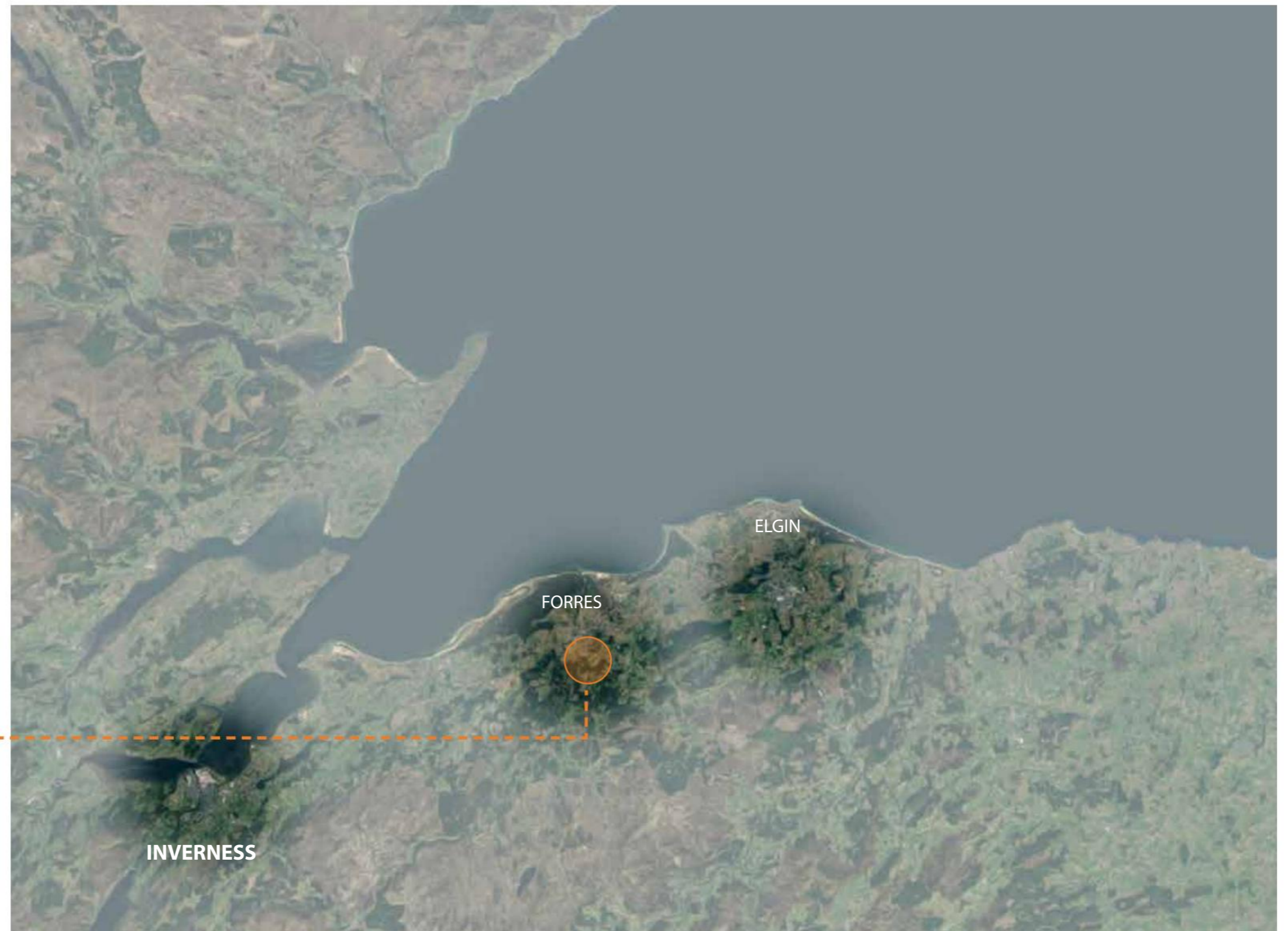


2.1 Forres

The town of Forres is located within the council of Moray, approximately 26 miles east of the city Inverness.

The town is also geographically close to the towns Elgin, Nairn, and Burghead as well as Findhorn, Auldearn and Kinloss.

The first historical indication of the existence of the town may be that shown as Varis on a map. It is suspected that "Forres" may be derived from this or a combination from the Gaelic words "fo" (below) or "far" (where) and "ras" (underwood).



The town of Forres in its wider context with the surrounding towns and cities

2.1 Forres

Forres has a deep-rooted history dating back centuries, with its burgh charter granted in 1153. This historical backdrop is reflected in heritage assets like Sueno's Stone, an ancient Pictish monument.

While the town has historical ties to trade and industry, notably in textiles and brewing, its contemporary identity is shaped by the acclaimed whisky production.

The bustling High Street, with various elements of history and portrayed throughout, stands as the heart of the area and define Forres' connectivity and community.

In addition to its architectural and historical significance, Forres prioritises community and recreational facilities. The town hosts various sports amenities, with golf courses at its periphery, and community centres that foster social engagement.

Forres demonstrates a commitment to preserving its heritage, fostering community bonds, and offering recreational spaces that enhance the quality of life for its residents.



Overview of the town of Forres

2.2 A Place Specific Vision

It is important to provide a school which is both physically stitched into the fabric of Forres and reflects what is important to the town; a true community hub which is developed for, used by and owned by the people of Forres.

The school should allow young learners to become better learners, grow values, develop skills and enhance the community whilst also reinforcing the values of effort, respect and ambition. The school will facilitate high quality learning and teaching that leads to improved levels of attainment and achievement and creates an environment which enables the development of leadership skills at all levels.

The building should form a strong connection to its immediate external environment and that beyond its site boundaries to encourage community engagement, develop and enhance inclusive practice and improve partnerships and family learning.



2.3 Local Development Plan

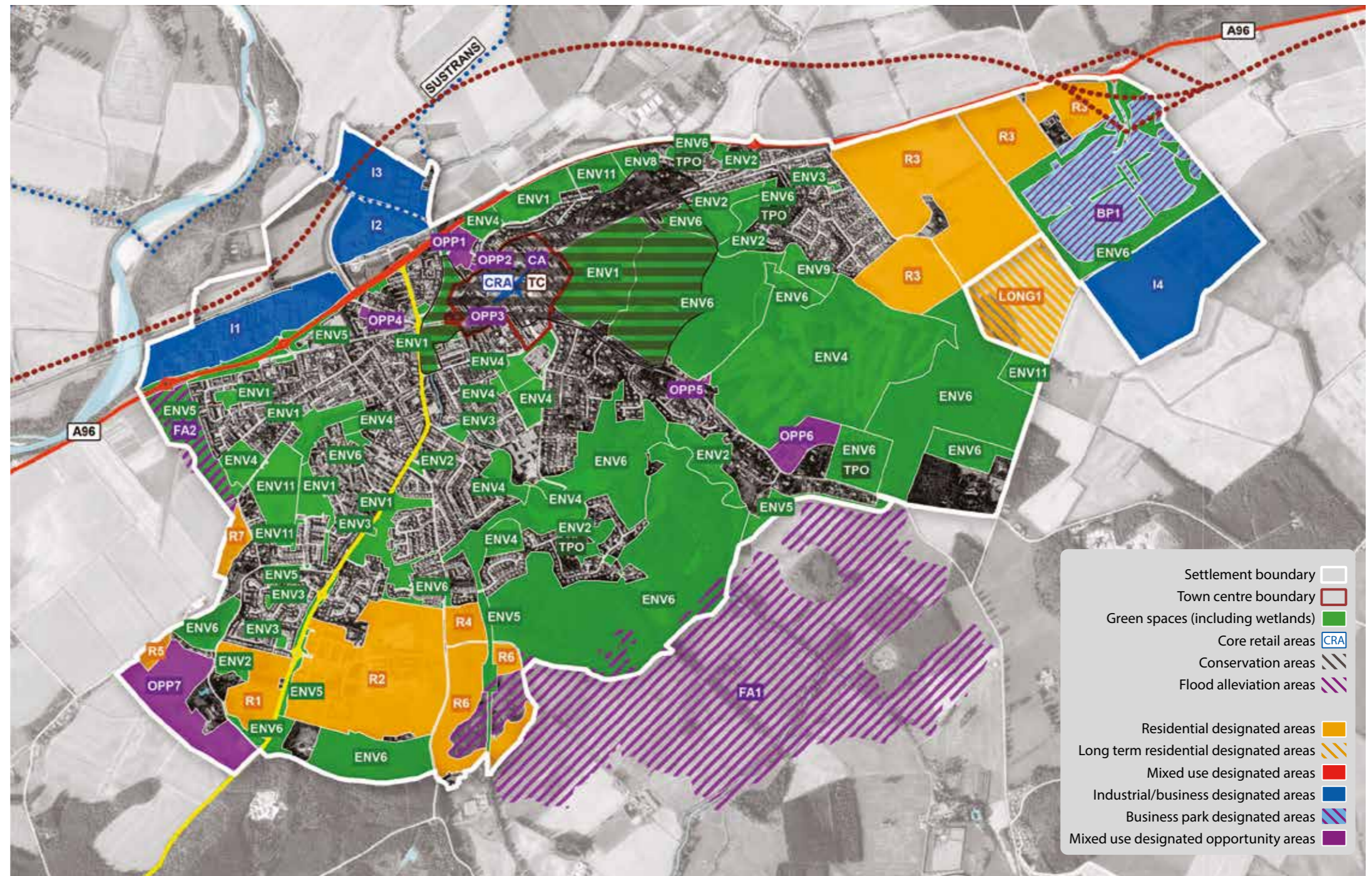
The policies for development of the area in and around Forres are covered by the Moray Local Development Plan 2020 and provides guidance on how the Council sees the area developing over the next 10 years.

The Local Development Plan (LDP) identifies that development proposals must reflect the traditional settlement character in terms of siting and design. It also states that design should enhance Forres' distinctive built heritage and the integrity of the Conservation Area.

The LDP notes the requirement of long term growth areas, including new neighbourhoods at Ferrylea, Lochyhill and Dallas Dhu which would aid in supporting and enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The LDP states the necessity for an additional 12ha of land for employment and support proposals for business development, which in turn would supplement the proposed new neighbourhoods.

The LDP also recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing the existing network of open and green spaces and to identify a network of new park and play areas within the development boundary of Forres.



Forres Local Development Plan Map, courtesy of Moray Council

2.4 Place Based Review

Place is a key pillar of public policy and investment in Scotland. A place-based approach is about joining up infrastructure, services and partnerships to better meet the needs of local communities; providing better opportunities and improving the impact of combined energy, resources and investment.

During SSPS Phases A and B, Moray Council and the Design Team commenced engagement with the existing school, stakeholders and the local community and partners in Forres. A 20 minute neighbourhood study was undertaken on the three site options; looking at both Council and partner assets.

The three sites have also been assessed against Moray Council's Strategic and SMART Objectives. A community event was held at the end of October to present and discuss the 20 minute neighbourhood analysis and strategic assessment outcomes. A survey has been issued to blue light services with responses received from Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service and NHS; it is also proposed to re-issue the survey to a wider pool of partners.

As part of the wider North Schools Programme, Moray Council propose to work alongside Hub North Scotland and the other participants to further develop the Place Based Review.



2.5 The Existing Site

The existing Forres Academy site is split into two areas. The main site lies adjacent to Roysvale Park, is bisected by the Mosset Burn and occupied by the school buildings, Forres Swimming and Hydrotherapy Pool, car parks and other external hard and soft sports pitches. There is also a satellite site to the south, accessible by footpaths from the main site which contains additional grass playing fields.

School - Guidance

The School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) 1967 states:

The area of site for a 1121 pupil secondary school (current pupil capacity) shall not be less than 6.5 acres (2.63 hectares), excluding sports pitches, roads, pathways and areas not generally suitable for use as school grounds.

The area of pitches for a 1121 pupil secondary shall not be less than 9 acres (3.64 hectares).

Total required site area, according to The School Premises (General Requirements and Standards) (Scotland) 1967 is 15.5 acres (6.27 hectares).

School – Site

The existing Forres Academy site is approximately 7.96 hectares.

School - Footprint

The existing Forres Academy footprint is approximate 10,100sqm/ 1.01 hectares (not including the swimming or hydrotherapy pools).



Existing school site boundary and the wider settlement boundary

2.6 Potential Locations for a New Community Hub

Moray Council has engaged with Hub North Scotland and a Design Team to begin work on designs for a new Forres Academy.

One of the first steps was to decide where the new school should go. From a list of five possible sites, three have been short-listed as suitable locations for the new Forres Academy (Roysvale Park, Lochyhill and Granttown Road).

Following the creation of this short-list, a more detailed site analysis and appraisal has been carried out for the three potential locations. The design team has also been able to assess the various sites against the project's strategic objectives.

Potential locations to accommodate school

-  Roysvale Park & Existing Site 6.1 Ha
-  Lochyhill / Enterprise park 5.8 Ha
-  Granttown Road 5.9 Ha
-  Forres Settlement Boundary



Potential locations for new Academy

3.0 ROYSVALE PARK



3.1 Location Overview



Roysvale Park site within the context of Forres

3.2 Historical Analysis

Forres is one of the oldest of Scotland's royal burghs with the charter granted in 1153. In the 12th century, Forres, along with Inverness, Auldearn, Nairn and Elgin formed part of a defensive chain along the south coast of the Moray Firth.

Throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, Forres thrived as a market town, capitalizing on its strategic location and burgeoning trade networks.

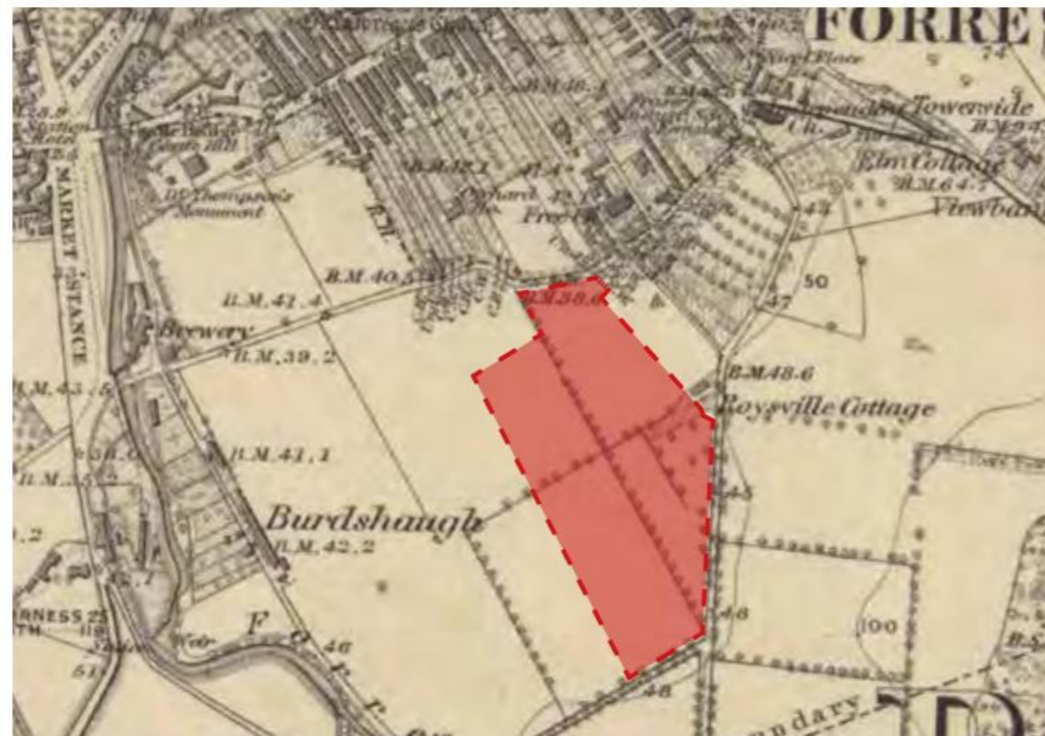
By the 18th and 19th century, the site still remained largely untouched. However the main town, particularly along the High Street, began to rapidly develop and became commercially and socially significant for the area.

During the late 19th century and mid-20th century, the town's growth continued, expanding away from the High Street and particularly along Burn of Mosset, with new roads and public footpaths appearing, allowing new housing and amenities to emerge.

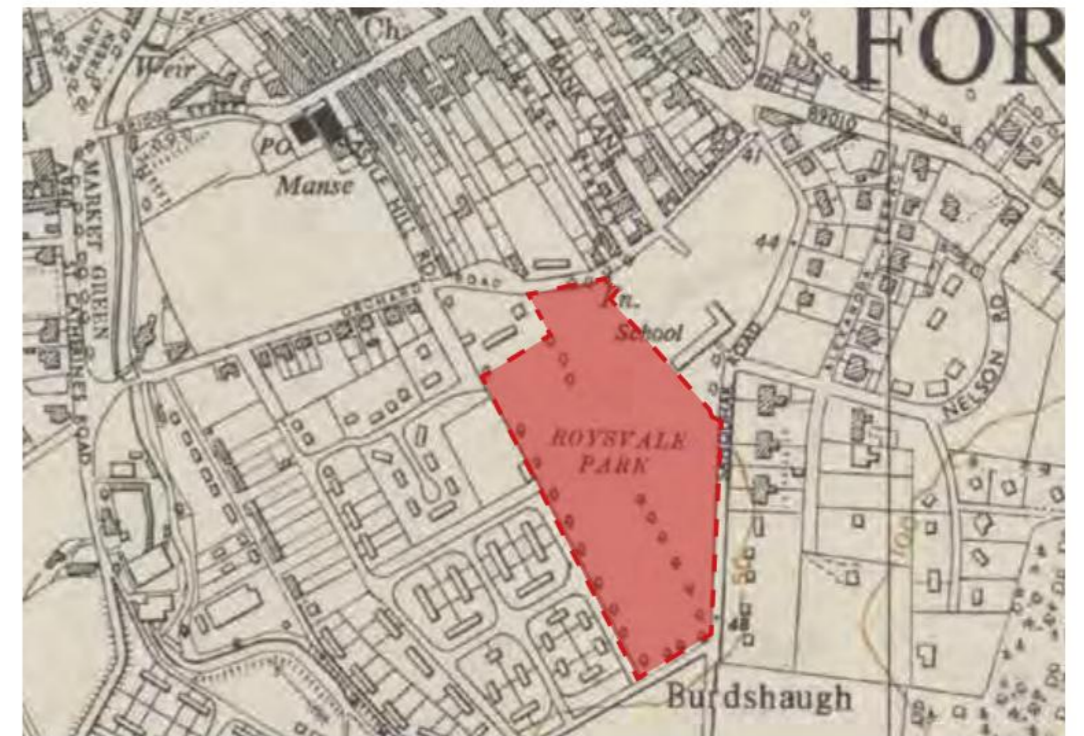
Roysvale Park

There has been a primary school on the ground adjacent to the park since the mid 20th century and has been expanded several times to accommodate the requirements of modern education.

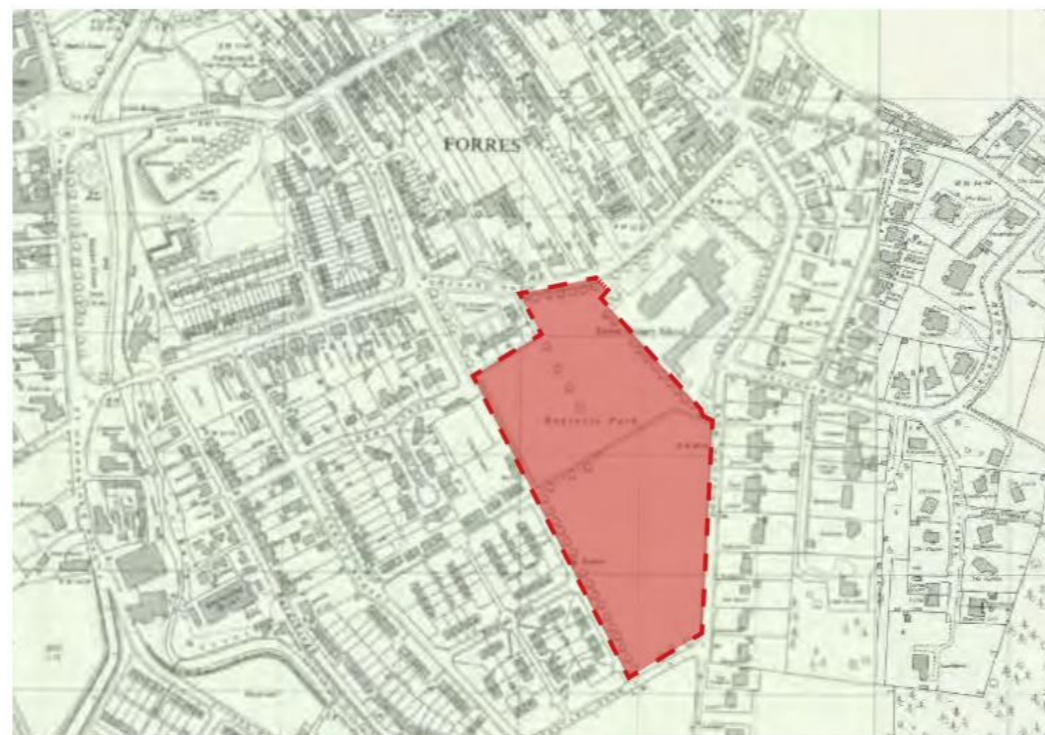
The park has remained largely untouched since transitioning into a public space in the 19th century.



c1870



c1930



c1970



c2023

3.3 Photographic Survey

St Laurence
Parish Church

Roysvale
Park

Applegrove
Primary
School



View of the Roysvale Park site looking north

3.3 Photographic Survey

Applegrove
Primary
School

Forres
Academy

Roysvale
Park

Forres
Community
Fire Station

Forres
Bowling Club



Aerial view of the Roysvale Park site

3.4 20 Minute Neighbourhood

Roysvale Park is located slightly to the south, whilst still remaining quite central, to the majority of the town's facilities.

Several community and amenity facilities are in close proximity to the site, such as the Forres Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre which adjoins to the existing school building. There are also several green spaces and public parks which are a 10-20 minute walk from the site.

Various food retailers are located along the town's High Street, as well as two supermarkets, Spar and Co-op, which are both, approximately 10 minute walks from Roysvale Park. A larger supermarket - Tesco - is along Nairn Road, which adjoins the High Street and is approximately a 16 minute walk.

The main public transport network for the town, the bus service, has several services and routes which are nearby to the site. The train station is to the north of the site and is a 17 minute walk.

KEY

Parks & Green Spaces

- 1 Grant Park
- 2 Cluny Hill
- 3 Sanquhar Loch & Woodlands
- 4 Mannachie Park
- 5 Roysvale Park
- 7 Fleurs Park
- 8 Thornhill Playing Field
- 9 Pilmuir Playing Field
- 10 Mosset Burn Park
- 11 Bogton Road Park
- 13 Academy Playing Field

Community & Sports Facilities

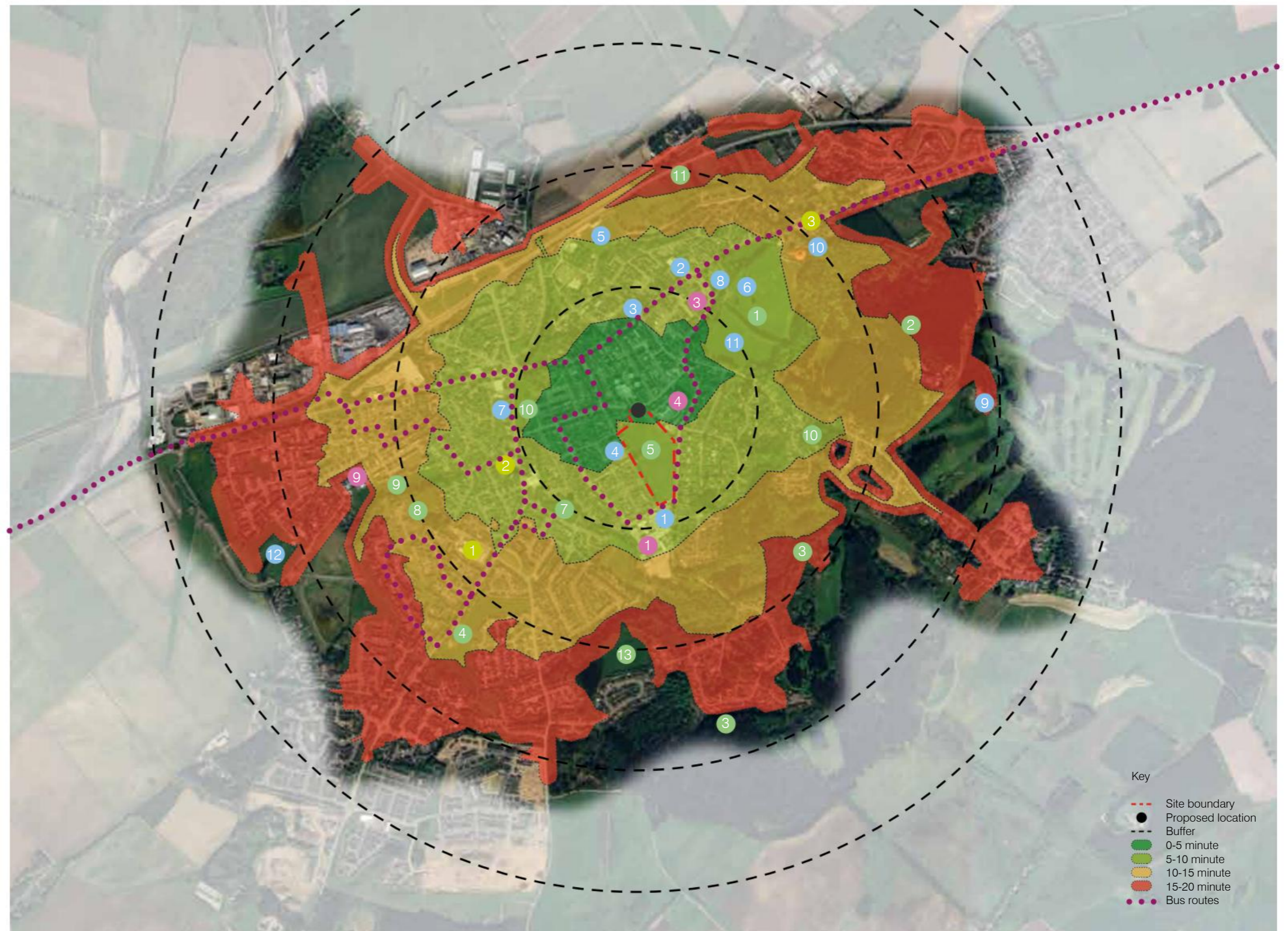
- 1 Swimming Pool & Leisure Centre
- 2 Forres House Community Centre
- 3 Forres Town Hall
- 4 Forres Tennis Club
- 5 Forres Mechanics Football Club
- 6 Forres St. Lawrence Cricket Club
- 7 Forres Bowling Club
- 8 Grant Park Bowling Club
- 9 Forres Golf Club
- 10 Forres Squash & Fitness Club
- 11 Forres Area Soccer 7s
- 12 Forres Thistle Football Club

Schools

- 1 Forres Academy
- 3 Anderson's Primary School
- 4 Applegrove Primary School
- 9 Pilmuir Primary School

Healthcare & Emergency Services

- 1 Forres Health & Care Centre
- 2 Forres Community Fire Station
- 3 Forres Police Station



Map showing the public amenities in relation to Roysvale Park

© Crown copyright [and database rights] 2023 OS AC0000806936 Moray Council.

3.5 Existing Utilities

Record drawings indicate that the proposed Roysvale Park site is clear of Electrical, Gas, Mains Water and Communications utilities infrastructure.

The utilities for the proposed new development would comprise of Electric, Mains Water and Communications Infrastructure. Records show that existing infrastructure for each of these services are located in close proximity to the site.

Utility capacities and the ability for local infrastructure to serve the site without significant network reinforcement will be confirmed as the design develops and applications are made. Notwithstanding that we believe the Roysvale Park site presents the option with least risk on the basis that the capacities associated with the existing school will be removed from the infrastructure locally and can be assigned to the proposed new school development.

The record drawings received will be verified through a Ground Penetrating Radar Survey (GPRS) during the next stage of the project should the site be selected as the preferred option.

With regard to drainage, the surrounding network is a fully combined system. A Pre Development Enquiry has been submitted to Scottish Water to establish if sufficient capacity exists to allow for both surface and foul water to be discharged to this network. In the event that there is insufficient capacity for the surface water, it should be noted that an offsite connection to the Burn of Mosset may be required.

Within the site boundary a 225mm drainage tail exists running north/south. It is understood that this redundant, however CCTV works will be required to confirm. Additionally, a below ground surface water storage trench exists to the boundary with Applegrove Primary School. This is identified on the constraints plans provided.

For further details and utility record drawings please refer to Appendix C.

3.6 Engineering Review

Earthworks and Site Levels

Existing Site Topography

The topographical survey was undertaken by Douglas Land Surveys Ltd in November 2023.

The data shows minimal level change throughout the site, there is a 3m level change from south to north, undulating between 14mAOD and 12mAOD.

Proposed Levels and Cut / Fill Strategy

In general, the existing topography is relatively flat, the site falls gently to the north, however, there is a slight valley in the levels through the centre of the field.

The FFL of the proposed school will require to be 600mm above the 1:1000 year flood level, which will need to be demonstrated through a detailed flood risk assessment. However, based on an initial assessment the building footprint and surrounding areas will need to increase in level by approximately between 400mm and 1.6m above existing topographical levels. At this stage it should be assumed that this will require to be built up with imported engineered fill.

Any water which is displaced by proposed development, up to the 1 in 200 year event, will need to be stored within the site boundary through a compensatory flood scheme. An area has been identified within Roysvale park, where levels will be shaped to ensure that flooding is controlled and no additional flooding outwith the site boundary occurs due to the development.

The current earthworks strategy allows for an approximate compensatory flood water volume of 5000 - 7000m³. The area identified to act as compensatory storage is displayed by the blue hatch in Figure 1, however this will be further

developed though detailed flood modelling. It should be noted that this flooding will be a rare event, and will not prevent the day to day use of this space outwith these extreme weather events.

Furthermore, the current earthworks model highlights that 8000m³ engineering fill is required under the building footprint. However, there is a cut fill balance within the remainder of the site.

Retention and Levels

Due to the requirements for compensatory storage and raising the finished floor level of the school, areas for low level retention and banking will be required in the design.

Resolving this level difference can be accommodated in a number of ways, and through careful consideration of the layout and landscape design this can be included in such a way as to not act as a constraint.

Transportation/ Parking

Subject to agreement with the roads department, the proposed main entrance location is proposed to be located along Orchard Road.

Locating accessible parking at the front entrance makes sense from user access requirements, it does present difficulties in terms of managing the parking to prevent misuse of the spaces and will need to be considered carefully in the next stage of design.

To further understand the traffic and parking patterns in the local area, parking surveys will be required to inform any future planning application. Initial discussions regarding the scope of these have been undertaken with Moray Council.

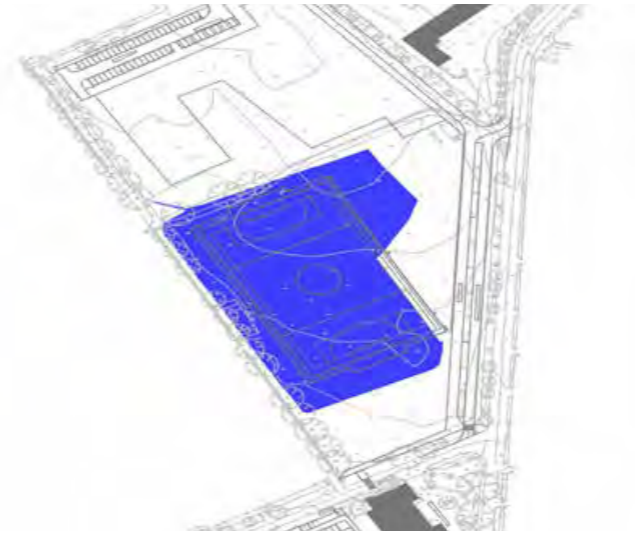


Figure 1. Proposed Area of Controlled Flooding During 1 in 200 year event



Figure 3. Moray Council Adoption Plan



Figure 2. Image from site walkover

3.6 Engineering Review

Geotechnical Review and Site Investigation

During the feasibility stage we have carried out an initial desktop review of the prevailing ground conditions on the site, taking cognisance of both BGS records and historic site investigation information from the surrounding area. This was followed up by a detailed site investigation the site works for which were completed in November 2023.

Previous land use

A review of the 1830-1880 historic map shows that the site was previously used for agricultural purposes. No major structures were recorded within the site boundary prior to the construction of the school. See Figure 4.

The primary school – Applegrove Primary - within the site boundary was officially opened in the 1950s.

From previous land use, the assumption is that overall risk of contaminants is low, however, results from the SI report will clarify the presence of contaminants.

It is assumed the current primary school building envelope will contain asbestos contaminants. An asbestos register will be required to address this fully.

Geology

From the recent site investigation works, borehole information generally shows a sand and gravel strata below a layer of topsoil. See Figure 8.

The lithological description from the British Geological Survey is gravel, sand and silt which further corroborates the borehole information.

The Coal Authority GIS database identified that the site is not within an area coal mining reporting or where coal outcrops are present. Based upon this information, it is concluded that coal mining will not affect the proposed development.

Foundations

The ground conditions on-site should, mostly, allow for conventional solution using an allowable bearing pressure of 150kPa. Further confirmation of this value will be received within the full SI report.

However, the foundation solution will have to be investigated further to the north east of the site, within the pink hatch in Figure 9. The ground conditions between WS01 and CP01 will not support a shallow foundation solution and localised ground improvement may be required in this area.

Based on 2000kN maximum column load the allowable bearing pressure of 150kPa would lead to relatively large pads, furthermore, there is a looser stratum of silty sand (WS02-05) around 2.3-3.1mbgl which will need to be considered in the settlement calculations once the location and levels of the proposed foundation and loads are understood.

An additional point of note is the presence of a very localised poorer deposit at 2mbgl at WS12, see Figure 9. However, as this is out with the area of the current development proposals, this is not considered to be a constraint.



Figure 4. Extract from 1830-1880s historical map



Figure 5. Extract from 1900s historical map



Figure 6. 2004 Aerial view



Figure 7. 2023 Aerial view

3.6 Engineering Review

Groundwater

The preliminary boreholes show that the water table varies from 0.69-1.96mbgl. Instantaneous recharge is noted which indicates that standing water table is present. Further examinations are ongoing to log these levels.

Based on this, it is likely that the contractor will encounter ground water during foundation and drainage excavations, and an allowance for dewatering should be considered as part of any cost appraisal.

Radon

A review of UK Radon mapping has indicated that the site is within an area of 1% of homes are affected by Radon. Therefore, based upon this dataset and in accordance with BRE 211(2015), the minimum level of Radon Protection is required for any future development at the site.

Ground gas risk

A full ground gas risk assessment is being prepared as part of the detailed site investigation. For this site, the primary potential sources of ground gas is considered to be:

- Potential generation and migration of ground gas (primarily carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane (CH4) attributable to microbiological decomposition associated within organic rich soils and strata.

Further considerations to these potential sources also depend on the potential for significant volumes of ground gas to be generated in addition to the concentration of ground gases and the capacity for organic material degradation.

All natural soils contain a proportion of organic material and have a biome of micro organisms that will degrade and cycle organic material as part of the natural soil cycle, with CO2 and CH4 respired as by-products depending on the prevailing ground conditions.

However, based on the results received to date, limited ground gas has been encountered and the site is considered to be low risk (CS1).

Borehole Log				Borehole No. WS03		
Project Name: Forres Academy		Project No. GA 15176		Sheet 1 of 1		
Location: Burdyard Road		Co-ords: E: 303777.00 N: 858533.87		Hole Type: WS		
Client: Goodson Associates		Level: 11.88		Scale: 1:25		
Dates: 29/1/2023		Rig Type: Competitor Dart		Competitor Dart		
Well	Water Strikes	Sample and In Situ Testing	Depth (m)	Level (m)	Legend	Stratum Description
	0.20	ES	0.30	11.58		MADE GROUND: Grass over brown sandy gravelly loessil with some rootlets. Gravel is angular to subangular fine to coarse of various lithologies.
	0.50	B				
	0.50	ES				
	0.50	CBR	10%			
	1.00	B				
	1.00	ES				
	1.20 - 1.45	D	N421 (4,54,4,6,7)	0.80	11.06	MADE GROUND: Grey slightly gravelly fine sand. Gravel is subangular fine to coarse of various lithologies including occasional blades.
	1.30	BPT				
	1.80	B				
	2.00 - 2.45	D	N426 (6,67,7,8,8)	2.70	9.18	Medium dense brown slightly silty brown SAND and GRAVEL. Sand & fine to coarse. Gravel is subangular to subrounded fine to coarse of various lithologies.
	2.00	BPT				
	2.80	B				
	3.00 - 3.45	D	N48 (2,10,2,2,2)			
	3.00	BPT				
	3.80	B				
	4.00 - 4.45	D	N410 (2,27,2,2,2)			
	4.00	BPT				
	4.45 - 4.90	D	N413 (2,27,3,3,4)			
	4.45	BPT				
			5.00	6.88		End of borehole at 5.00m

Figure 8. Example Borehole log



Figure 9. Exploratory plan with area of loose ground highlighted in a pink hatch

3.6 Engineering Review

SUDS Strategy

Surface Water Discharge

The existing surface water run-off is 17l/s, this was concluded using a 4.9ha area of greenfield.

The main impact of a development is to increase the proportion of impermeable surfaces (e.g., roofs and paved areas) within the site and without careful planning this can increase peak rate runoff. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) aim to mitigate this effect by emulating natural drainage systems and the provision of storage.

Treatment must be provided in accordance with the recommendations of The SUDS Manual (CIRIA Document C753), SEPA and other relevant guidance. To determine surface water treatment requirements, The SUDS Manual (CIRIA Document C753) initially requires identification of the various land use classifications involved in the development. Using Table 4.3 (Page63), the following classifications are considered relevant:

- Non-residential parking with infrequent change (e.g. schools, offices, < 300 traffic movements a day)
- Commercial/Industrial roofing: Inert materials

The guidance confirms that the various land use classifications identified require use of the Simple Index Approach. This involves a comparison between indices of likely pollution levels against SUDS performance capacities. To deliver adequate treatment, the selected SUDS components should have a total pollution mitigation that equals or exceeds the pollution hazard index. There are several options for treatment, however, the best choice will need to consider the site constraints and space available.

For this reason, it is anticipated that options such as SUDS basins and ponds will not be viable for this site due to their large land take.

As such, options such as porous paving, filter strips and linear swales which can be accommodated within the landscaping will be preferred. It is also assumed that to attenuate the additional storm water runoff from the development, a below ground storage tank will also be required.

The connection for the surface water is yet to be approved by Scottish Water. However, the preferred option is to connect to the combined sewer to the north of the site, although, combined sewer connections are not favoured by Scottish Water. In the instance that a combined connection is rejected, a surface water sewer will have to be installed along Orchard Road with an outfall into the Burn of Mosset, this option would involve installing an offsite sewer approximately 350m long in adopted land. See Figure 11.

Based on a 5l/s run off rate for the site, which is yet to be approved by Scottish Water, it is estimated approximately 1600m³ of storage will be required to store the 1:200 year storm with 37% climate change. This may vary depending on area of proposed hard standing and potentials for capturing the 1:200 year storm on site.

The primary method of attenuation will be provided by below ground attenuation tanks as it is anticipated that options such as SUDS basins and ponds will not be viable for this site due to their large land take. Depending on the final location and depth of the tanks, due to the high ground water further measures to reduce the buoyancy of these tanks may need to be considered in the detailed design.



Figure 10. Existing surface water and foul water (combined) system as displayed on Scottish Water maps.



Figure 11. Potential surface water sewer along Orchard Road

3.6 Engineering Review

Foul Water

A Pre-Development Enquiry has been submitted to Scottish Water to determine the effect of the proposed development on the local sewer network.

Flooding

Existing flooding occurs within the site boundary with both the 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 year storm. A flood risk assessment completed by Moray Council in 2021 depicts the flood extents of both the Burn of Mosset and River Findhorn considering their flood prevention schemes. The flood extent from the 2021 flood risk assessment is corroborated by the SEPA flood maps. See Figures 12&13.

The 1 in 200 year storm flood risk assessment carried out during the works for the Findhorn flood prevention scheme display no flooding within the site. Therefore, the 1 in 200 year fluvial flooding occurs on the site due to flooding of the Burn of Mosset. See figure 14.

Further Flood risk assessments required in order to understand the flood risk within the site, however as noted in the previous sections, it is proposed that any flood water displaced by the development will be offset through an on site flood compensation scheme, subject to detailed design and approval by Moray Council Flood Team and SEPA.

Full reports can be found in Appendix D.

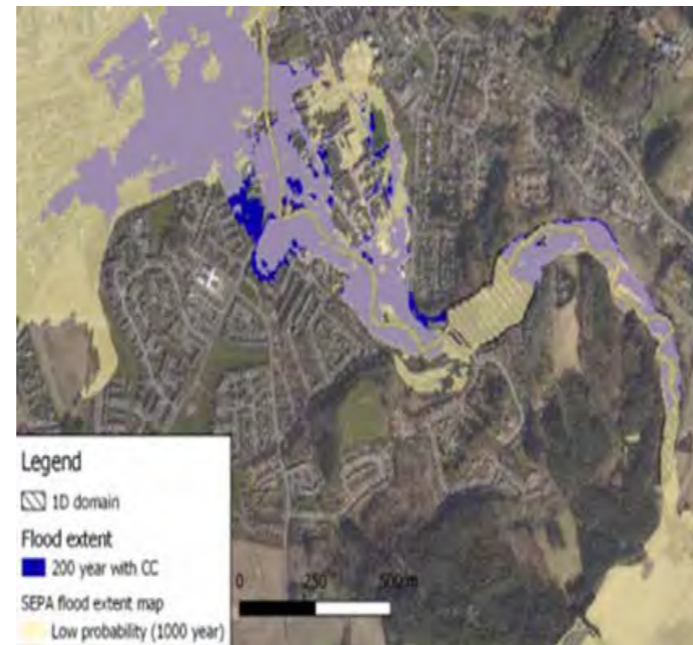


Figure 12. Flood risk Assessment showing both a 1 in 200+CC year flood and 1 in 1000 year flood map undertaken by Moray Council in 2021

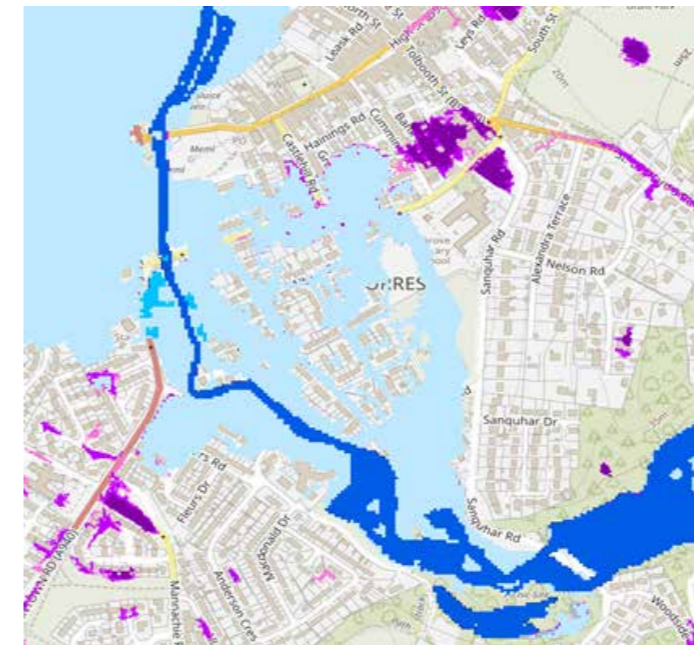


Figure 13. SEPA flood map

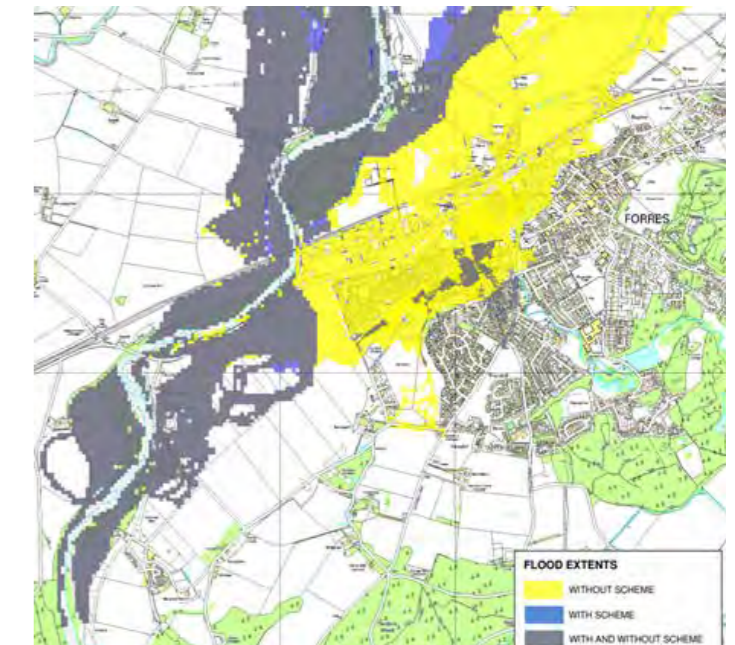


Figure 14. Flood risk Assessment 1 in 200 year flood map undertaken in 2008

3.7 Existing Land Use

Existing Site and Land Use

The site is currently formal parkland. To the northern boundary is the existing Applegrove Primary School. The playing fields associated with the school form part of the site and are currently unfenced and accessible by the public. Orchard Road runs east west to the north of the site and is currently used to access the existing Primary School and several public car parks. There is an area to the north of the primary school which currently public open space.

To the western boundary of the site there is an avenue of mature trees which run along Roysvale Place and in front of the Forres Tennis Club. There are a number of residential properties which overlook the site and screening is provided by the mature avenue of trees.

The southern part of the site which is existing park land know as Roysvale Park is bounded to the east by residential properties and Sanquhar Road. The existing Forres Academy lies to the south of Roysvale Park. The site consist of single storey buildings and parking areas as well as mature trees and vegetation.



View looking at the Roysvale Park site

3.8 Opportunities

Community Facility

The building shall be a facility for the whole community. Located to be as accessible and welcoming as possible. It shall also look to create links with existing community facilities within the area. As well as creating new links, there is also a potential to utilise and retain facilities from the existing school such as the swimming pool, parking areas and playing fields.

Intergeneration Learning

Opportunity for the building to link with the existing primary school (Applegrove Primary) and develop intergenerational learning opportunities. Furthermore, there is an additional opportunity create and develop an educational programme linked to the construction process.

Access

The approach and routes which pupils and other pedestrians shall take will be considered. There is an opportunity to give the approach and access at various positions, either on Orchard Road, Sanquhar Road or Roysvale Place.

Environment / Biodiversity

Opportunities to position the new building within a central position on the site to maximise the amount of sun it will get throughout the year. The existing mature trees provide a mature landscape setting and there is an opportunity to further enhance the biodiversity by introducing new native planting.

Public Transport Links

The new building should link with existing public transport and road infrastructure and minimise pedestrian travel distance, and time, from the existing town. This will promote active and sustainable travel as well as developing 'safer routes' to school initiative.



Site Opportunities

- Key
- Site Boundary
- Vegetation
 - Greenspaces
 - Woodland areas
 - Trees
 - TPO areas
 - Burn
- Building Heights
 - 1 storey
 - 2 storey
 - 3 storey
 - 5 storey
- Conservation
 - Conservation areas
 - Listed landscaped areas
 - A listed buildings
 - B listed buildings
 - C listed buildings
- Routes
 - Bus routes
 - Dava Way route
 - Right of way

3.9 Constraints

← - Proposed Access

On the east edge of the site, there is an existing junction along Sanguhar Road which serves the houses behind. Any vehicular access/ egress points for the proposed school are to be a minimum of 25m from the existing junction opposite.

Existing Services

There are several existing services within the site boundary as well as existing attenuation tanks. The proposed building needs to consider the location of these services.

Privacy

The design and construction of the new school building must prioritise privacy considerations for neighbouring houses, especially given the dense urban setting. Strategic placement of windows, landscaping, and architectural features should be implemented to minimize visual intrusion.

Trees

The site features multiple areas of mature trees, necessitating careful consideration during the design and construction of the new school building. Ensuring the preservation of these trees is crucial, with attention given to factors such as visibility and proximity to existing junctions as well as the potential for bat roosts and other protected species.

← - Right of Way

There are two 'rights of way' within the site boundary, one which bisects the site and one which sweeps around the boundary, both of which must be taken into account in the design of the new school. Communication with the council is imperative to ensure the proper integration of these easements into the proposed school layout.

- Key
- Site Boundary
 - Services
 - Watermain
 - Water supply facilities
 - Surface water drainage
 - Foul drainage
 - Sewerage systems
 - Conservation
 - ▨ Conservation areas
 - ▨ Listed landscaped areas
 - A listed buildings
 - B listed buildings
 - C listed buildings



Site Constraints

4.0 LOCHYHILL



4.1 Location Overview



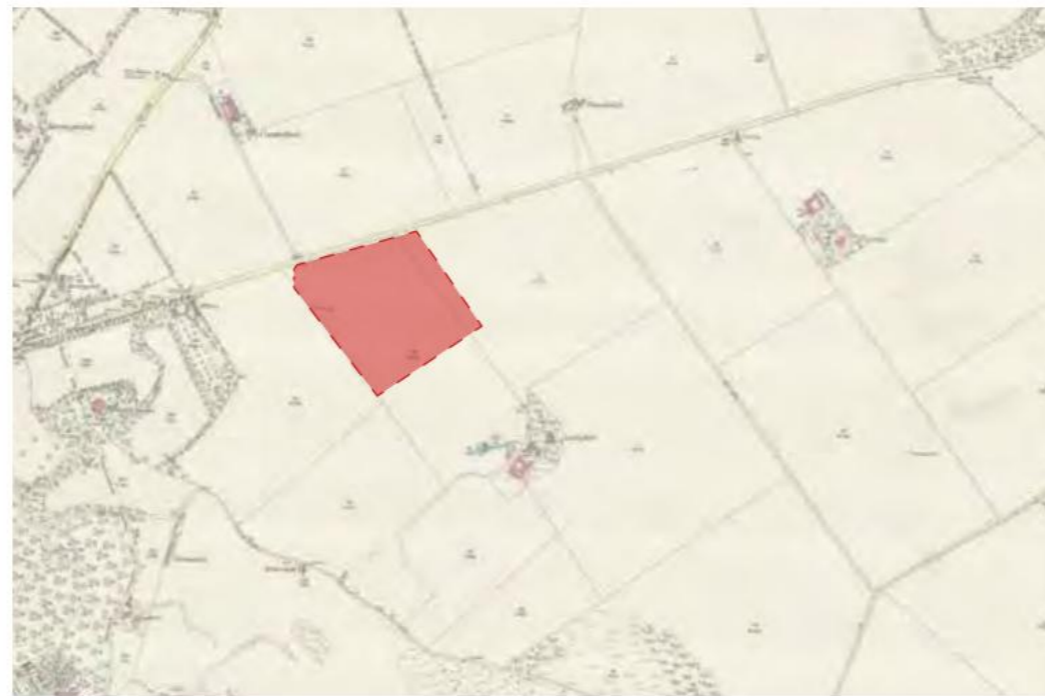
Lochyhill site within the context of Forres

4.2 Historical Analysis

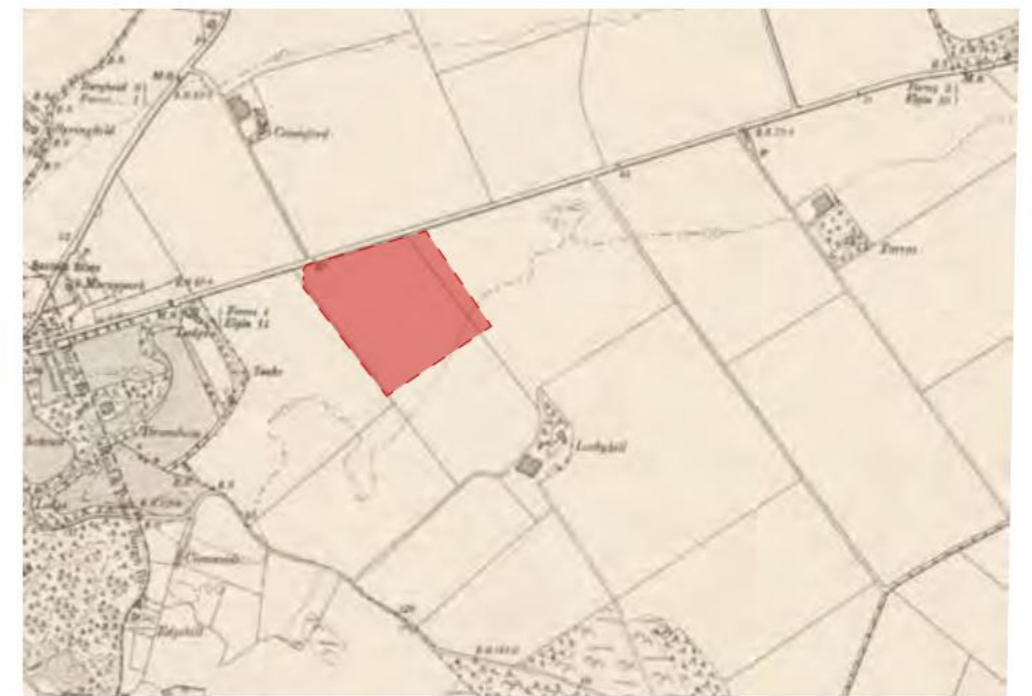
The site at Lochyhill has been characterised by a rural setting with an agricultural farm on the adjacent land for the majority of its existence. The land to the west of Lochyhill underwent a gradual transformation into a residential community in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Emerging in the late 20th century to the east of the site, the Enterprise Park highlights Forres' dedication for economic growth and innovation. Crafted in response to the needs of contemporary industry, the park has a strategy to draw in businesses and develop employment opportunities within the town. Its architectural layout integrates contemporary industrial structures and facilities.

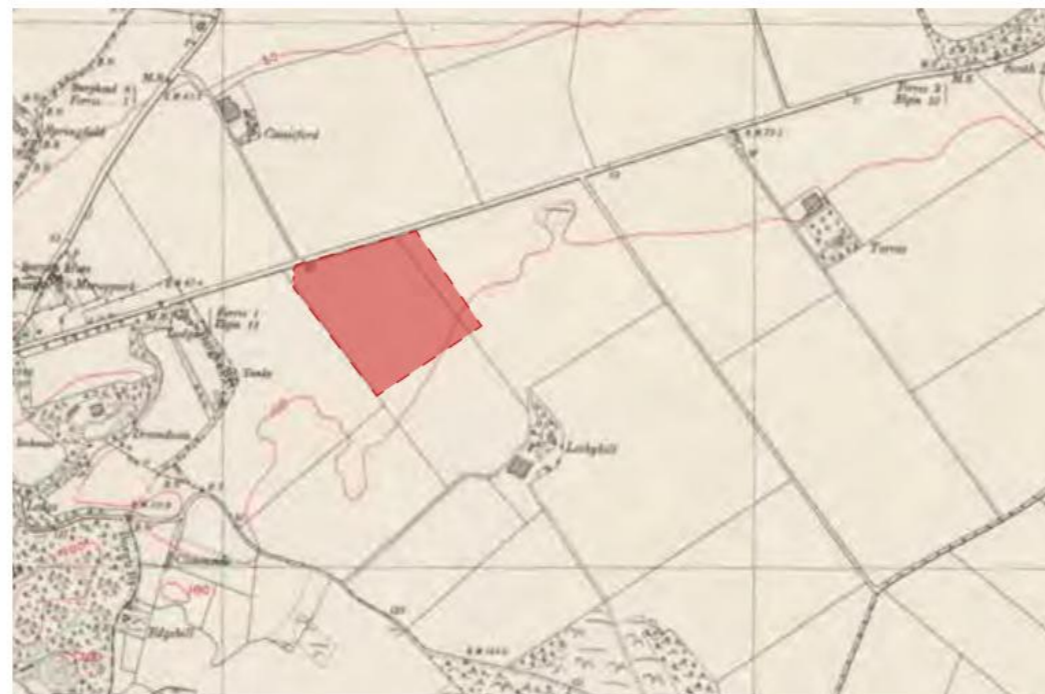
During this period, despite recent residential and enterprise park developments around the periphery of the site, the site itself has remained mostly untouched.



c1870



c1910



c1950



c2023

4.3 Photographic Survey

Forres Enterprise
Park (behind trees)

Lochyhill
Site



View of the Lochyhill site looking south

4.3 Photographic Survey



Aerial view of the Lochyhill site

4.4 20 Minute Neighbourhood

The Lochyhill site is on the outskirts of the town and is located east to the majority of Forres' facilities.

The Forres Enterprise Park, which is located east of the site, is a 15 minute walk and accommodates several small and medium sized businesses.

Several community and amenity facilities are located around the site, such as the Forres Golf Club and the Forres Squash and Fitness Club. There are also a couple of public green spaces and woodlands which are in excess of a 20 minute walk from the site.

The majority of the food retailers are located along the town's High Street and the closest supermarket, which is the Co-op, is approximately a 20 minute walk to the west of the site.

The main public transport network for the town, the bus service, has a service which runs along the A96, directly north of the site. The train station is to the west of the site and is a 30 minute walk.

KEY

Parks & Green Spaces

- ② Cluny Hill
- ⑥ Muir, Newforres & Council Woods

Community & Sports Facilities

- ⑨ Forres Golf Club
- ⑩ Forres Squash & Fitness Club

Healthcare & Emergency Services

- ③ Forres Police Station



Map showing the public amenities in relation to Lochyhill.

© Crown copyright [and database rights] 2023 OS AC0000806936 Moray Council.

4.5 Existing Utilities

Record drawings indicate the existence of Utility Infrastructure running across the wider development site in which the proposed school site sits. This comprises of Scottish Water Mains Water and overhead BT Lines that serve Lochyhill Cottages to the south of the development site. Initial proposals for siting the school site would result in the existing BT Infrastructure having to be diverted. The proposed school site is not affected by the existing Scottish Water infrastructure.

The utilities for the proposed new development would comprise of Electric, Mains Water and Communications Infrastructure. Records show that existing infrastructure for each of these services are located in close proximity to the site.

Utility capacities and the ability for local infrastructure to serve the site without significant network reinforcement will be confirmed as the design develops and applications are made. It should be noted that the wider development plans will introduce further infrastructure capacity requirements and may impact on the network capacity review at the time of application for the school. Should Lochyhill's be identified as the preferred site we would encourage early engagement and co-ordination with the developer of the wider site and its infrastructure.

The record drawings received will be verified through a Ground Penetrating Radar Survey (GPRS) during the next stage of the project should the site be selected as the preferred option.

With regard to drainage, a public 225mm diameter vitrified clay foul water sewer runs through the site parallel with the A96. This sewer will require a 3m stand off to any proposed new buildings, unless otherwise agreed with Scottish Water. The closest surface Water Sewers are located within Drumduan Road to the west.

The capacity of the surrounding Scottish Water network will be confirmed through a Pre Development, however for surface water it is assumed that a connection would be made to the existing network at an Greenfield Equivalent rate. This will require a new adopted sewer to be constructed down Drumduan Road, approximately 200m long which would require a connection to an existing 600mm diameter concrete pipe.

For foul water it is assumed that any new connection will be formed to the existing sewer which passes through the site.

For further details and Utility record drawings please refer to Appendix C.

4.6 Engineering Review

Earthworks and Site Levels

Existing Site Topography

No topographical survey has been completed for the site.

The OS maps, seen in Figure 1, shows the south of the site sits at approximately 40mAOD at Lochyhill Farmhouse and falls north towards the A96 to approximately 25mAOD.

Proposed Levels and Cut / Fill Strategy

Earthworks will be required to form the new access road, parking and rear play areas.

At the appropriate time a high-level cut & fill exercise would be carried out using 3D Civils to minimise off-site disposal. However, as it is understood that any development is to be located adjacent to the A96, the overall level change in this area is unlikely to result in a significant cut/fill exercise to provide a development platform.

Ground Conditions - Previous Land Use

A review of the 1830-1880 historic map shows that the site was previously used for agricultural purposes. No major structures were recorded within the site boundary prior to the construction of the proposed school. See Figure 3.

From previous land use, the assumption is that overall risk of contaminants is low, however, results from the SI report will clarify the presence of contaminants.

Geology

An SI report was conducted for the site in 2008, 49no.trial pits and 4no.boreholes were carried out. These confirmed the following general strata:

- Dark brown sandy TOPSOIL (0.25-0.8m thick, average 0.4m)
- Loose to medium dense and dense fine to medium SAND with varying proportions of sub rounded to well-rounded gravel and cobbles, occasionally described as SAND & GRAVEL (proved to 7.0mbgl)

The distribution between loose and medium dense sand is highlighted in Figure 4. The light blue hatch displays trial holes with loose sand present to approximately 1.2-2mbgl, the green hatch highlights holes with loose sand present from approximately 0-1.2mbgl.



Figure 1. OS - Map Extract



Figure 2. Extract from 1830 - 1880s historical map



Figure 3. Aerial view 2022



Figure 4. The distribution between loose and medium dense sand. Blue hatch displays trial holes with loose sand present to approximately 1.2-2mbgl. Green hatch highlights holes with loose sand present from approximately 0-1.2mbgl.

4.6 Engineering Review

Earthworks and Site Levels

Nearby borehole information from the British Geological Survey archives shows sand and gravel layers above a sandstone bedrock throughout ground strata. The lithological description from the British Geological Survey details sand and gravel as superficial deposits and sandstone as the bedrock geology.

Further SI investigations will be required to supplement this information based on the detailed development proposals. Further testing will also be required to confirm there has been no change to any contamination levels on the site.

The Coal Authority GIS database identified that the site is not within an area coal mining reporting or where coal outcrops are present.

The site is within an area of 3-5% Radon potential. Therefore, Radon Protection is required.

Groundwater

Groundwater was recorded during the ground investigation in BH1 at 4.6mbgl and at 3.32mbgl and 3.26mbgl during subsequent monitoring visits on 08/04/2007 and 14/05/2007 respectively. Water strikes were recorded during excavation of trial pits 1 to 6 at the lowest point (NW corner) of the site at levels of 1.9 to 2.8mbgl. Based on this ground water may be encountered in deeper excavations.

Foundations

The interpretive report provided confirms that the medium dense granular soils will provide a suitable bearing stratum, with allowable bearing capacities of 100kN/m², for standard strip foundations. In areas of loose sand, highlighted in blue in Figure

5, an allowance for additional trench fill should be allowed for so that adequate bearing strata can be reached. Further detailed SI investigations required in order to confirm this assessment.

SUDS Strategy

Surface Water Discharge

The connection for the surface water is yet to be approved by Scottish Water, and the area of hard standing is yet to be set, therefore, the outfall rate cannot be determined. However, based on the assumption the school will have a similar layout to the proposals at Roysvale Park it is estimated approximately 1400m³ of storage will be required to store the 1:200 year storm with 37% climate change.

The primary method of attenuation will be provided by below ground attenuation tanks as it is anticipated that options such as SUDS basins and ponds will not be viable for this site due to their large land take.

Treatment will be provided by options such as porous paving, filter strips and linear swales which can be accommodated within the landscaping.

Foul Water

The capacity of the Scottish Water Network and treatment plant will need to be confirmed by Scottish Water through a Pre-Development Enquiry.

Flooding

Pluvial flooding observed on SEPA flood maps, however, this is not of concern as drainage design will take this into consideration.

No flood protection nearby, however, no risk of fluvial flooding from either Burn of Mosset or river Findhorn in accordance with the SEPA flood maps and the river Findhorn.

Full reports can be found in Appendix D.

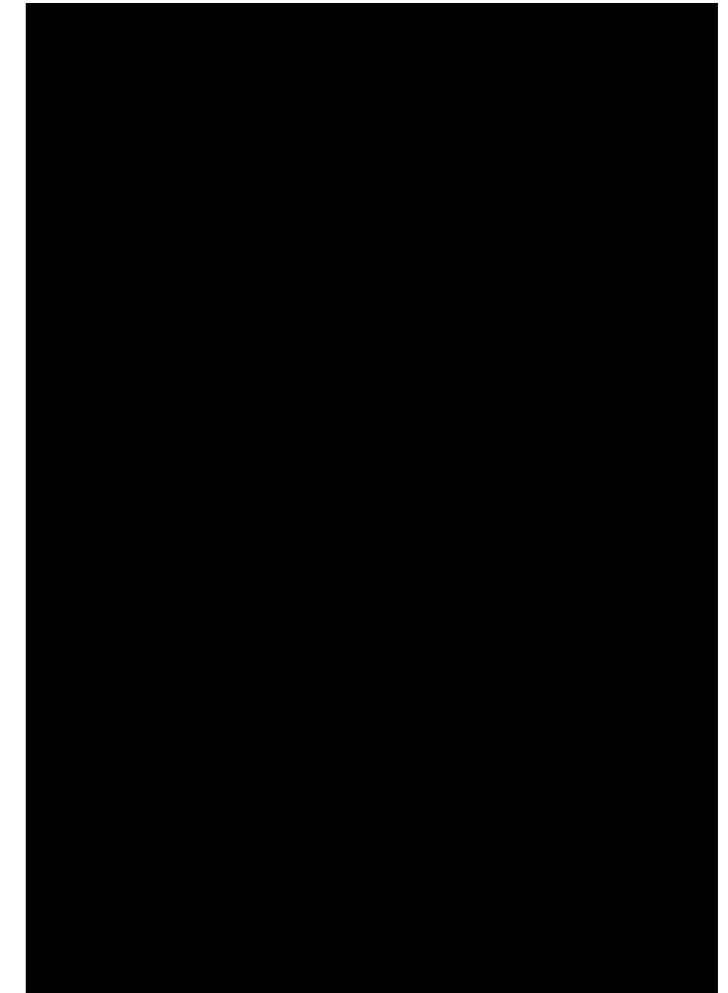


Figure 5. Borehole data from 2008 SI



Figure 6. SEPA flood maps showing pluvial flooding

4.7 Existing Land Use

Existing Site and Land Use

The site is located to the north east of Forres on the edge of the town. It is best described as urban fringe. To the north of the site the A96 runs east to west. The site is currently a greenfield site - farmland and has a number of small farm buildings on the southern boundary. It is also allocated as R3 – Residential in the LDP.

To the east is the Forres Enterprise Park and a number of detached residential properties. The site boundary has a mature hedgerow and woodland planting.

To the west of the site is residential estate and Forres Golf Club. Drumduan Road could provide the main vehicular route into the school as it runs along the western boundary of the site.

The site rises up from the A96 and has a gently sloping profile. There are several areas of mature planting within the site and views are dominated by a tree lined ridge. Views looking from the ridge to the north are of farmland and the A96 dominates the view.



View looking at the Lochyhill site

4.8 Opportunities

Daylight / Environment

Opportunities to position new building on the site to maximise the amount of sun it will get during the year. Due to the site being clear of existing buildings and trees, the new school can be orientated in optimal position to deliver a sustainable building in terms of energy consumption and environmental conditions

Public Transport Links

The new building should link with existing public transport infrastructure and minimise pedestrian travel distance, and time, from the existing town to promote active and sustainable travel. The location of this site as well as the close proximity of public transport links means there is opportunity for other services to move there in the future, additionally benefiting from the neighbouring Enterprise Park

Existing Buildings

As there is no existing school currently on this site, there is no requirement to decant pupils to another location whilst the construction work is ongoing thus meaning their education is not disturbed. Furthermore, as this site is clear and outside of a conservation area, the construction process will be relatively smooth and the contractors compound can be placed at the site boundary with minimal impact on existing residential areas.

Green Space

As there is no existing trees and minimal ecological value, biodiversity enhancements will be easy to achieve. Additionally, there is an opportunity to develop a natural surface water management system using SuDs.



Site Opportunities

4.9 Constraints



Services

The existing mains water and BT Infrastructure run through the site. The existing water main cannot provide the preferred 125mm connection for the fire main. This means that a cost of provided upgraded infrastructure could be expensive. Furthermore, drainage runs east west through site easements which could impact on building location.



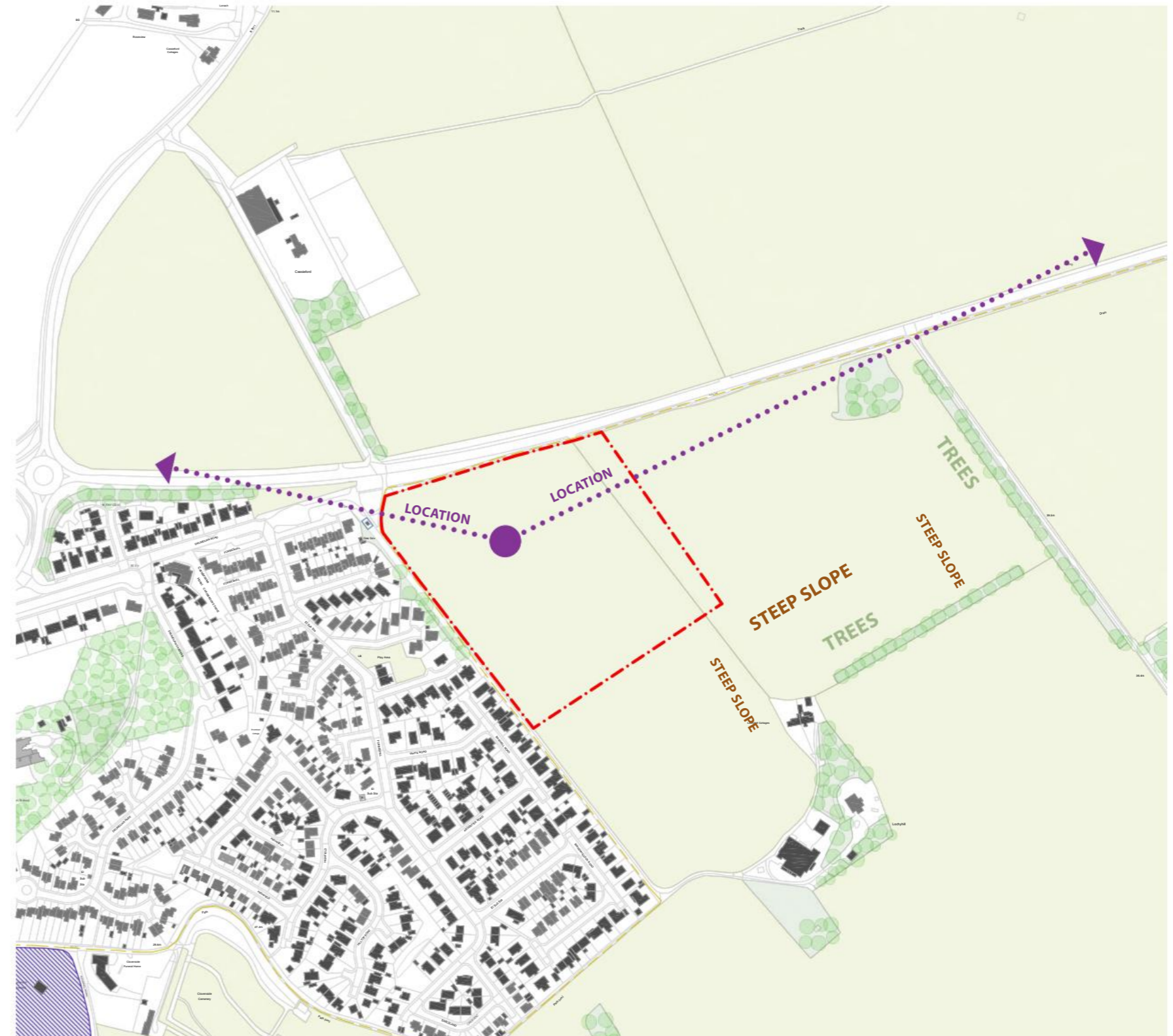
Location

As this location is on the edges of the town, a proposed school with amenities located a significant distance away poses challenges for accessibility and convenience. This situation can lead to increased transportation costs, longer commute times, and hinder the establishment of a cohesive school-community connection. Additionally, there is no existing primary school which hinders the possibility to develop 5-18 campus



Archaeological Interest

There is evidence of archaeological interest within the site so further survey work will be required.



Key
 - Site Boundary

Site Constraints

5.0 GRANTOWN ROAD



5.1 Location Overview



Granttown Road site within the context of Forres

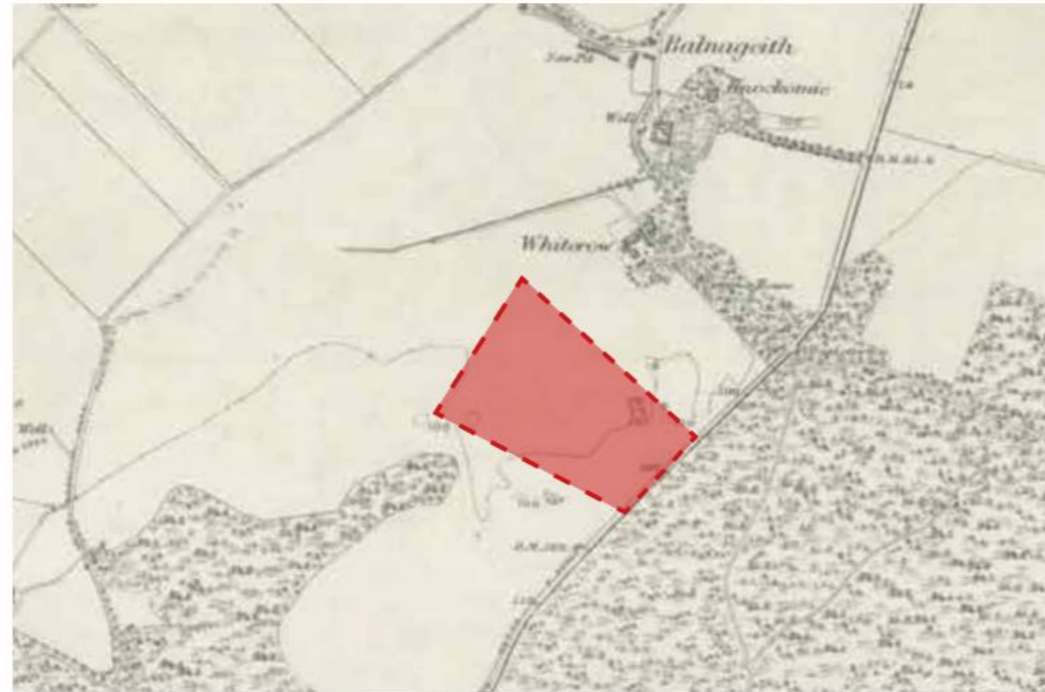
5.2 Historical Analysis

Located on the western edge of Forres, the Grantown Road site has long showcased a natural landscape featuring expansive green areas, farmlands with associated structures, and dense woodlands.

While much of the woodlands and green spaces endure, the area to the east of the Grantown Road site has recently undergone substantial residential development. This shift can be attributed, in part, to Forres' expansion and the heightened demand for housing in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Located just northeast of the site boundary, additional residential development is underway within the new Woodroffe Grange development, contributing to the town's evolving urban landscape.

Similar to the Lochyhill site, despite ongoing development surrounding its periphery, the site itself has largely remained untouched for a significant period.



c1870



c1900



c1970



c2023

5.3 Photographic Survey

Grantown
Road Site



View of the Grantown Road site looking north

5.3 Photographic Survey

Granttown
Road Site

Woodroffe
Grange residential
development



Aerial view of the Granttown Road site

5.4 20 Minute Neighbourhood

The Granttown Road site is on the outskirts of the town and is located south-west to the majority of Forres' facilities.

A large number of the food retailers are located along the town's High Street and the closest supermarket, which is the Co-op, is a 15 minute walk, on Granttown Road, to the north east of the site.

There are several public green spaces in the southwest of Forres but these are all located in excess of a 20 minute walk from the site. The Dava Way (a 23 mile trail across the ancient Celtic province of Morayshire) can be linked into via a 25 minute walk from the site.

There is a new residential development which is currently under construction - Woodroffe Grange - which is a 5 minute walk from the site.

The train station is to the north east of the site and is approximately 40 minute walk.

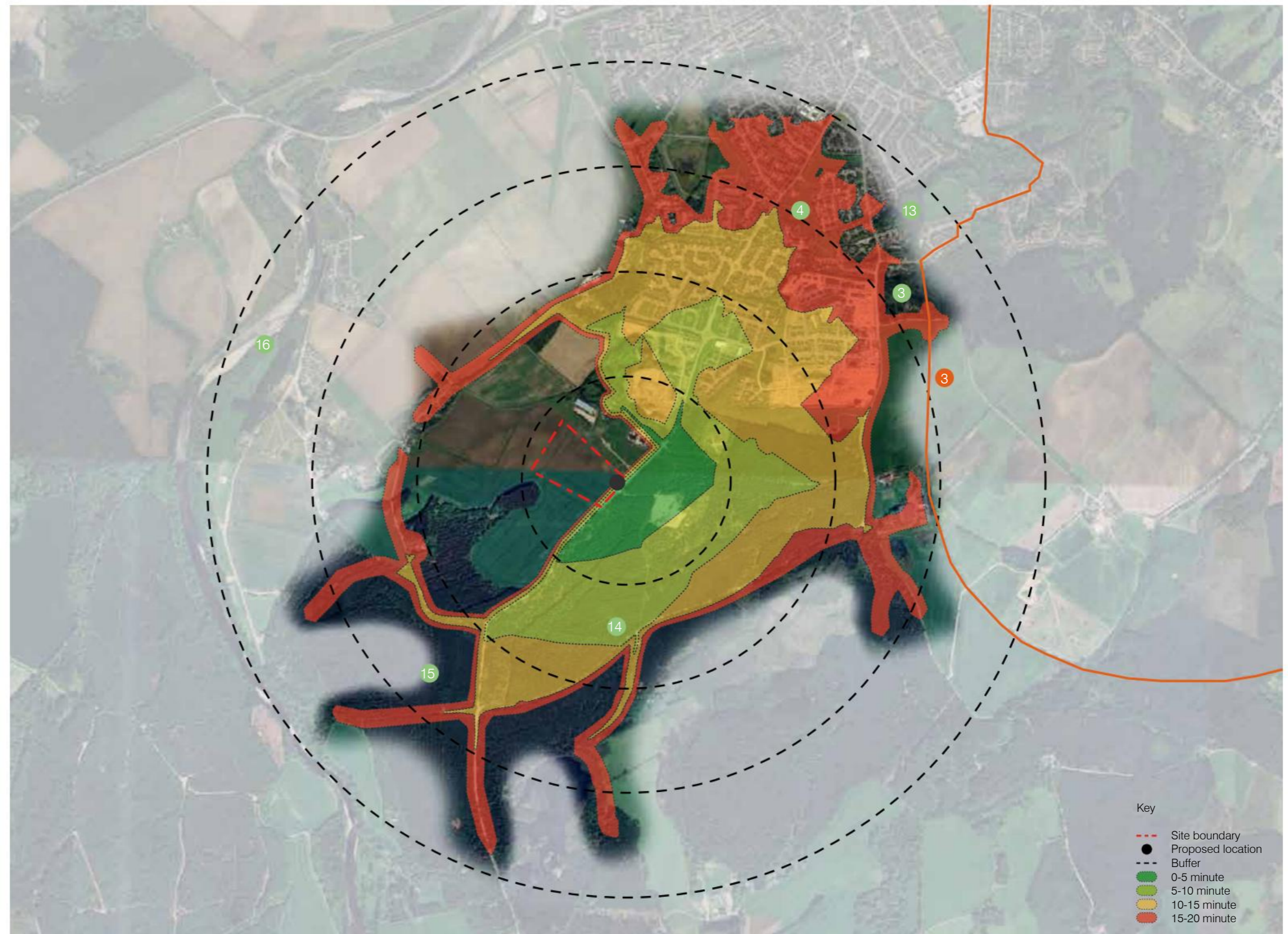
KEY

Parks & Green Spaces

- ③ Sanquhar Loch & Woodlands
- ④ Mannachie Park
- ⑬ Academy Playing Field
- ⑭ Loch of Blairs & Woodland
- ⑮ Limekilns Wood
- ⑯ River Findhorn

Travel Routes

- ③ The Dava Way



Map showing the public amenities in relation to Granttown Road.

© Crown copyright [and database rights] 2023 OS AC0000806936 Moray Council.

5.5 Existing Utilities

Record drawings indicate the existence of major Utility Infrastructure in close proximity of the site. There is a high-pressure gas main and overhead 11kV SSE Infrastructure near the eastern boundary.

The high-pressure gas main has been identified as a critical part of the national infrastructure. Diversion or alteration of this pipeline is not recommended and should the site be identified as the preferred option then working within the SGN constraints will be necessary. For this pipeline the construction of any buildings will not be permitted within 32 mtrs, other groundwork's could be undertaken up to 6mtrs either side of the pipeline. Initial indications are that these constraints will not have a significant effect on the proposed school development.

A risk assessment would be conducted against the overhead HV lines that sit on the eastern boundary and would be developed and assessed against the proposed setting-out arrangement within the site. Should an unacceptable risk be identified then an application will be made to re-route the HV Infrastructure underground.

The utilities for the proposed new development would comprise of Electric, Mains Water and Communications Infrastructure. Records show that existing infrastructure for each of these services are located in close proximity to the site.

Utility capacities and the ability for local infrastructure to serve the site without significant network reinforcement will be confirmed as the design develops and applications are made. With the site being located on the southern outskirts of Forres and from information contained within the record drawings there is a higher level of risk that utilities capacities will be available without further reinforcement.

The record drawings received will be verified through a Ground Penetrating Radar Survey (GPRS) during the next stage of the project should the site be selected as the preferred option.

With regard to drainage, there are no existing adopted sewers within the site boundary, and an Pre Development Enquiry will be required to confirm the location and capacity for any connection to the wider Scottish Water network. The closest foul sewer is located within the development north of the site at Woodroffe Grange. To form a foul connection to this network, a new adopted sewer approximately 500m long would be required to be constructed along Grantown Road.

No Surface water sewers are located in the vicinity, therefore it is assumed that any surface water will be discharged to the watercourse to the south of the site at an equivalent greenfield rate and subject to any required SEPA and 3rd party land consents.

For further details and Utility record drawings please refer to Appendix C.

5.6 Engineering Review

Earthworks and Site Levels

Existing Site Topography

No topographical survey has been completed for the site.

The OS maps, seen in Figure 1, shows the south of the site sits at approximately 35mAOD and falls north towards the river Findhorn to approximately 20mAOD.

Proposed Levels and Cut / Fill Strategy

As the development area is relatively flat, limited earthworks will be required to form the new access road, parking and rear play areas.

At the appropriate time a high-level cut & fill exercise would be carried out using 3D Civils to minimise off-site disposal.

Ground Conditions - Previous Land Use

A review of the 1830-1880 historic map shows that the site was previously used for agricultural purposes. No major structures were recorded within the site boundary prior to the construction of the proposed school. See Figure 2.

The development to the south of the site started construction in 2022, as can be seen in Figure 4.

From previous land use, the assumption is that overall risk of contaminants is low, however, results from the SI report will clarify the presence of contaminants.

Geology

There is no nearby borehole information from the British Geological Survey archives, however, the lithological description from the British Geological Survey depicts sandstone bedrock with gravel and sand superficial deposits. Finalised SI information will be required to determine site specific ground conditions.

The Coal Authority GIS database identified that the site is not within an area coal mining reporting or where coal outcrops are present.

The site is within an area of 1% Radon potential. Therefore, the minimum level of Radon Protection is required.



Figure 1. OS - Map Extract



Figure 2. Extract from 1830 - 1880s historical map



Figure 3. Aerial view 2003



Figure 4. Aerial view 2022

5.6 Engineering Review

SUDS Strategy

Surface Water Discharge

The connection for the surface water is yet to be approved by Scottish Water, it is assumed the outfall will be to the watercourse south of the site subjected to 3rd party land consent.

The area of hard standing is yet to be set, therefore, the outfall rate cannot be determined. However, based on the assumption the school will have a similar layout to the proposals at Roysvale Park it is estimated approximately 1400m³ of storage will be required to store the 1:200 year storm with 37% climate change, this is based on greenfield runoff rate being approved by Scottish Water.

The primary method of attenuation will be provided by below ground attenuation tanks as it is anticipated that options such as SUDS basins and ponds will not be viable for this site due to their large land take.

Treatment will be provided by options such as porous paving, filter strips and linear swales which can be accommodated within the landscaping.

Foul Water

The capacity of the Scottish Water Network and treatment plant will need to be confirmed by Scottish Water through a Pre-Development Enquiry.

A new development south of the site has the potential to provide a foul water connection, to be approved by Scottish Water. This will require a new adopted sewer to be constructed down Granttown Road, approximately 500m long.

Flooding

Pluvial flooding observed on SEPA flood maps, however, this is not of concern as drainage design will take this into consideration.

No flood protection nearby, however, no risk of fluvial flooding from either Burn of Mosset or river Findhorn in accordance with the SEPA flood maps and the Moray Council Flood Risk Assessment.

Full reports can be found in Appendix D.



Figure 4. SEPA flood maps showing pluvial flooding

5.7 Existing Land Use

Existing Site and Land Use

Greenfield located to the south of Forres town centre. The A940 runs along the south eastern boundary of the site and the site can be accessed from this road. To the east of the site there is a large belt of mature woodland. Housing is located to the north of the site and accessed from Ferry Road. There is also a belt of woodland planting which will provide screening to the properties locating along this side of the site. The site is relatively flat and feels open with long open views to the north west and views of mature woodland to the south.



View looking at the Grantown Road site

5.8 Opportunities

Daylight / Environment

Opportunities to position new building on the site to maximise the amount of sun it will get during the year. Due to the site being clear of existing buildings and trees, the new school can be orientated in optimal position to deliver a sustainable building in terms of energy consumption and environmental conditions

New Neighbourhood

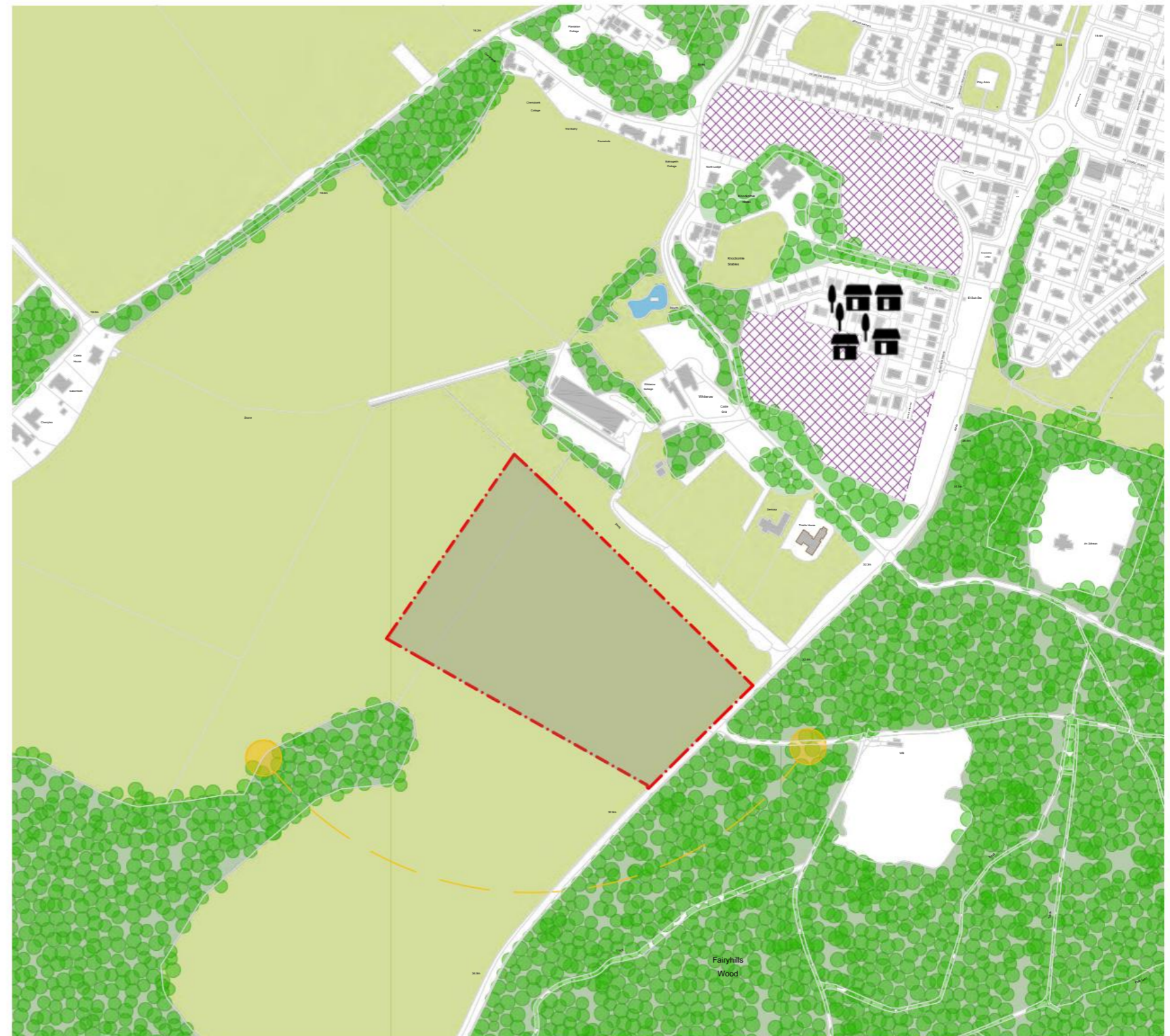
The new housing development in the vicinity is advantageous for the location of a potential new school, as it not only addresses the growing residential needs but also creates a vibrant community hub that promotes accessibility and engagement with educational resources.

Existing Buildings

As there is no existing school currently on this site, there is no requirement to decant pupils to another location whilst the construction work is ongoing thus meaning their education is not disturbed. Furthermore, as this site is clear and outside of a conservation area, the construction process will be relatively smooth and the contractors compound can be placed at the site boundary with minimal impact on existing residential areas.

Green Space

As there are no existing trees and minimal ecological value, biodiversity enhancements will be easy to achieve - aiding in creating plenty of outdoor spaces for education promoting a 'nature based campus'.



Site Opportunities

5.9 Constraints

Public Transport

The absence of an existing public network route near this site for a possible school is disadvantageous, potentially hindering accessibility for students and limiting community engagement with the educational institution.

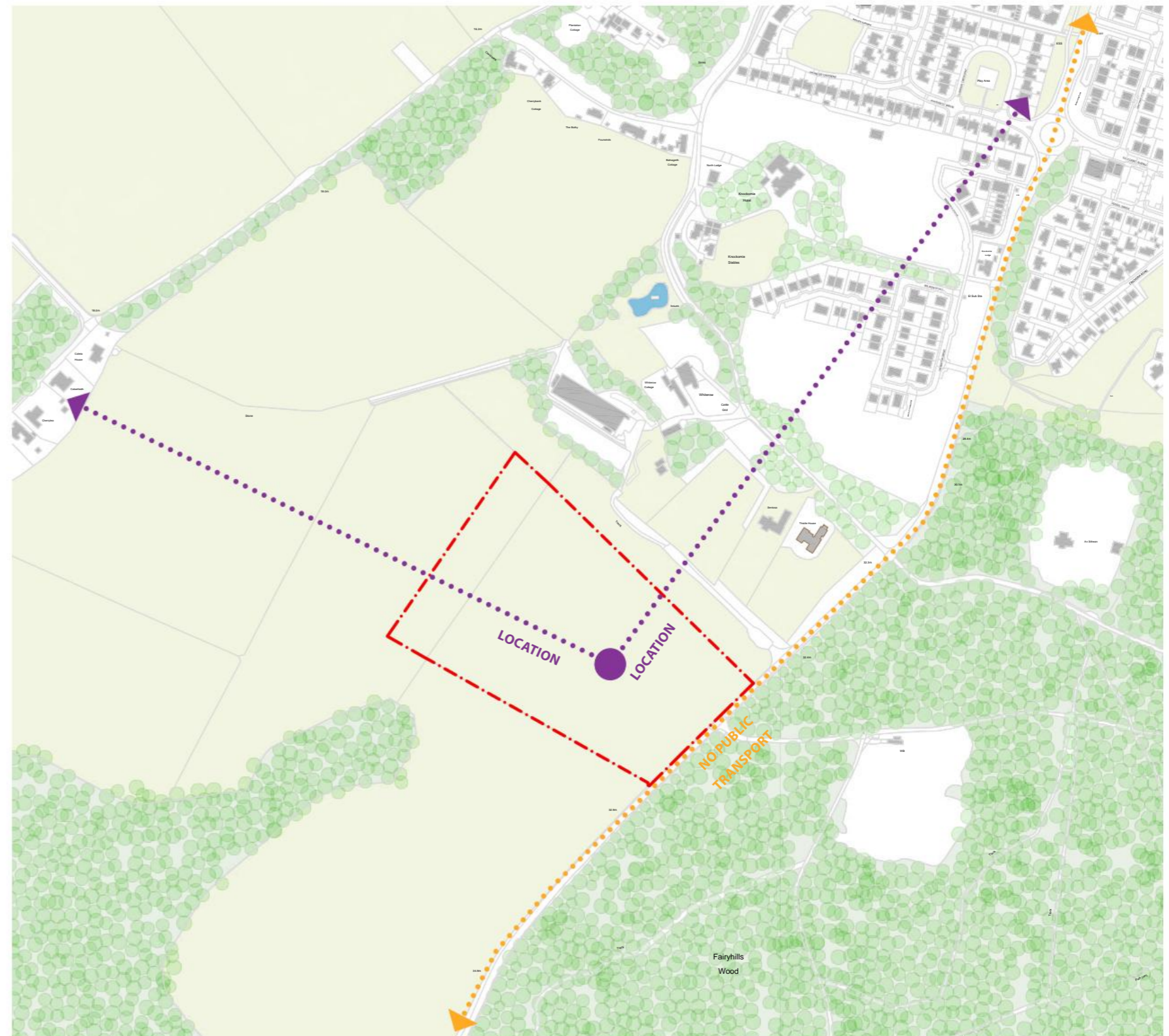
Unknown Services

There is no foul water connections on or within site boundary. A new offsite connection would be required along the A940 to the existing network on Webster Drive. Additionally, as there is no surface water sewers on site or in vicinity, surface water will need to be taken to ground or to existing drainage channels adjacent to Ferry Road.

Location

As this location is on the edges of the town, a proposed school with amenities located a significant distance away poses challenges for accessibility and convenience. This situation can lead to increased transportation costs, longer commute times, and hinder the establishment of a cohesive school-community connection. Additionally, there is no existing primary school which hinders the possibility to develop 5-18 campus.

Key
 Site Boundary



Site Constraints

6.0 Site Location Appraisal



6.1 Site Appraisal

At the end of October 2023, Moray Council held an engagement session at Forres Library to present and discuss site selection for a new Forres Academy. The consultation boards were also made available online and remained in the library for public viewing until the end of November, comments were welcomed from the community in person and via email. These boards assessed each site option against the project's Strategic and SMART objectives; a series of issues, goals and criteria that were developed by Moray Council as part of their strategic planning around future schools in Moray.

In December 2023, the Design Team and Moray Council undertook a wider technical appraisal of the three sites: scoring each of the sites against criteria such as planning considerations, flood risk and existing utilities as well as the previous 'place' based assessment.

The scoring matrix and outcomes can be found in Appendix F.



Roysvale site



Lochyhill site



Grantown Road site

7.0 Forres Academy Current Site



7.1 Location Overview



Existing school site within the context of Forres

7.2 Historical Analysis

Forres is one of the oldest of Scotland's royal burghs with the charter granted in 1153. In the 12th century, Forres, along with Inverness, Auldearn, Nairn and Elgin formed part of a defensive chain along the south coast of the Moray Firth.

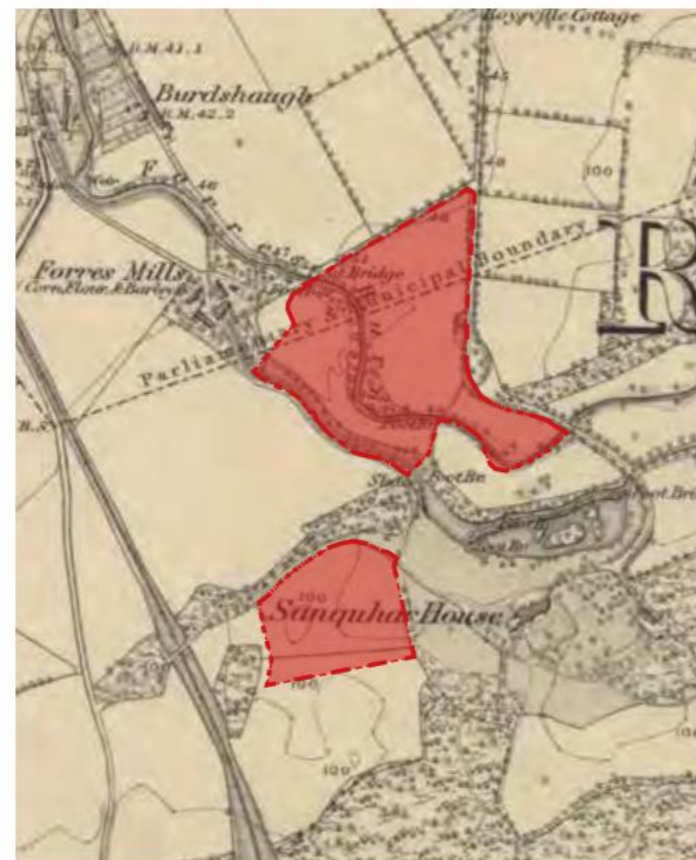
Throughout the 15th and 16th centuries, Forres thrived as a market town, capitalizing on its strategic location and burgeoning trade networks.

By the 18th and 19th century, the site still remained largely untouched. However the main town, particularly along the High Street, began to rapidly develop and became commercially and socially significant for the area.

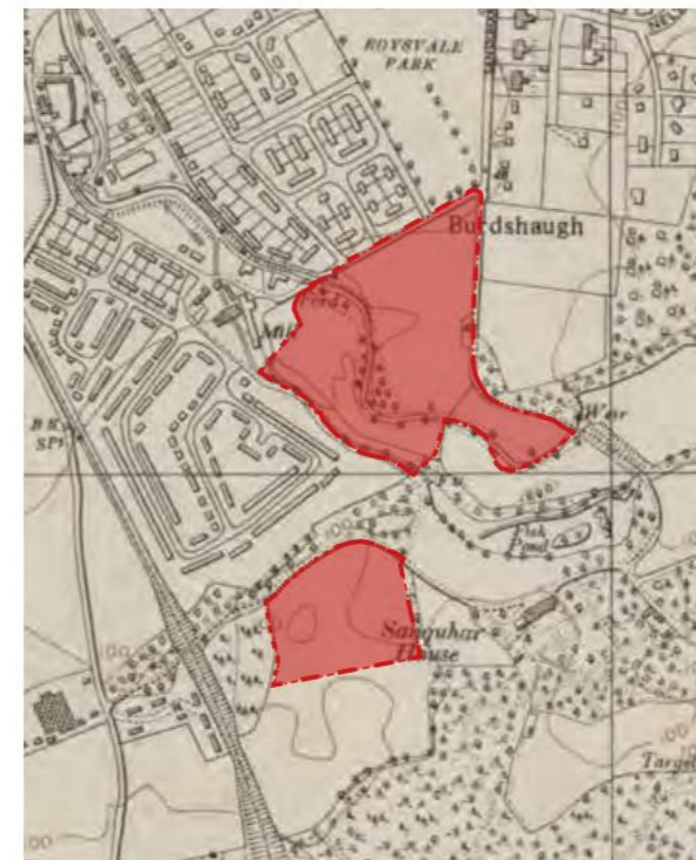
During the late 19th century and mid-20th century, the town's growth continued, expanding away from the High Street and particularly along Burn of Mosset, with new roads and public footpaths appearing, allowing new housing and amenities to emerge.

Forres Academy - Existing School

The existing school was built in 1969 and has been expanded and updated several times to accommodate the requirements of modern education.



c1870



c1940



c2023

7.3 Site Analysis



Existing Buildings

Within the site and adjoining the existing school is a community swimming pool building. This will stay open and functioning during the demolition of the existing school. Any future development will have to consider its relationship with the existing swimming pool building.



Multiple sites

The existing school is spread over 2 sites with 1 of the sites used as a playing field for sports activities. Additionally, the main site, which inhabits the school building, is split in half by the Burn of Mosset. The new school, on any of the potential sites, will be within a single boundary.



Restricted Development

There is an area within the eastern wing of the site which is out of bounds for future development as it has recently had an outdoor gym installed on it. Any future development will have to consider its relationship with the new gym.



Flooding

As per SEPA flood information, there are a several areas within the site and existing building which have a flood risk due to the location of the school in relation to the burn. See the Appendix for further detailed information.



RAAC

There are several areas within the school which have RAAC present and these areas are not accessible or usable by the staff or pupils. This has caused disruptive learning for the pupils and thus a new school is urgently required.



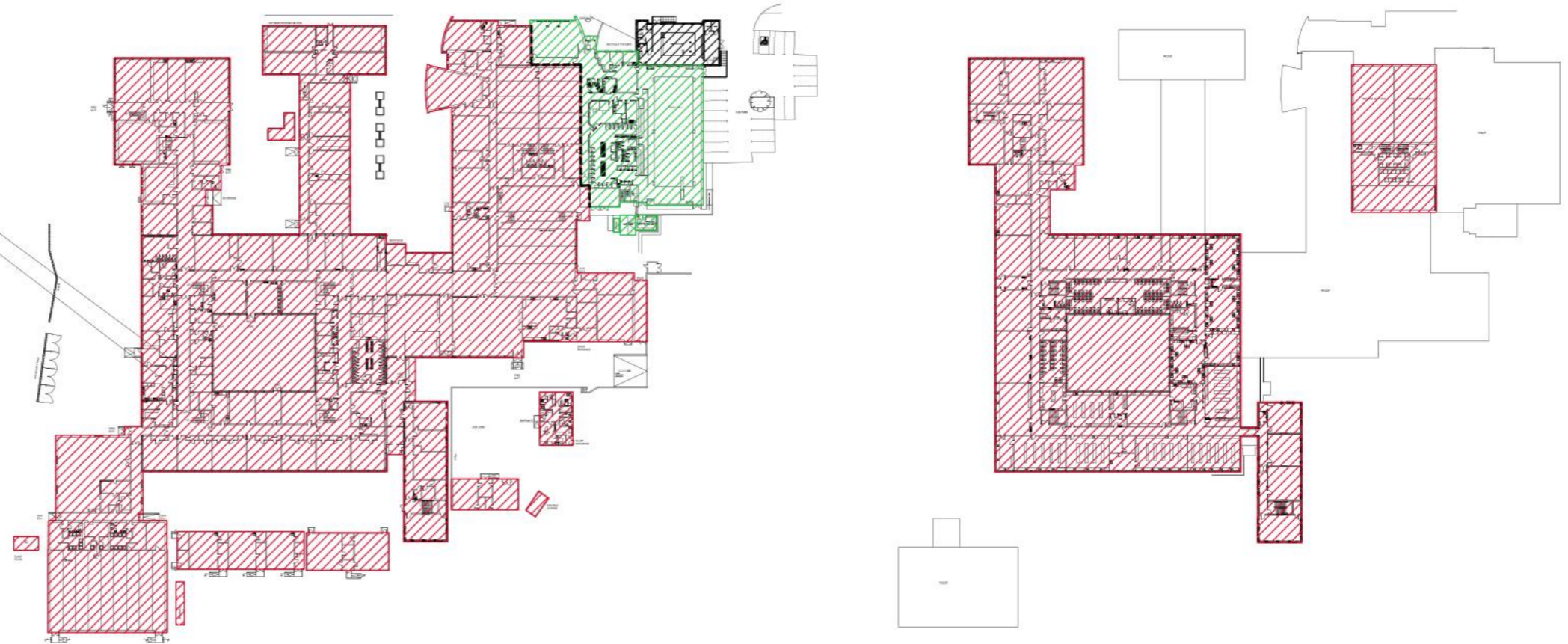
- Key**
- Site Boundary
 - Vegetation**
 - Greenspaces
 - Woodland areas
 - Trees
 - TPO areas
 - Burn
 - Building Heights**
 - 1 storey
 - 2 storey
 - 3 storey
 - 5 storey
 - Conservation**
 - Conservation areas
 - Listed landscaped areas
 - A listed buildings
 - B listed buildings
 - C listed buildings
 - Routes**
 - Bus routes
 - Dava Way route
 - Right of way

Existing site analysis

7.4 Existing Building

Given the aforementioned challenges with refurbishment and reuse referenced in Section 1.6, the recommendation has been made by Moray Council to demolish the majority of the existing Forres Academy. Demolition will be undertaken following the completion of the new school building to ensure continuity of education for the young learners.

The areas of the building which are an exception to this are the swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool and associated ancillary spaces. Following significant investment and refurbishment, completed in 2016, it is proposed that these buildings are retained and a new external wall constructed along the line of demolition. The swimming pool is currently rated as 'B' for Condition and therefore it is anticipated that there will be minimal refurbishment works required to these spaces.



Demolition plan of existing building

- Key
-  Complete Demolition
 -  Retain with Minimal Refurbishment
 -  Retain with No Works
 -  New External Wall

7.5 Existing Utilities

Utility Records received identify existing utilities infrastructure serving the school. In general, this information informs the ongoing development of isolations and disconnections during the demolition phase. In addition, it will aid the assessment of the scope of works associated with the option of retaining the swimming pool/ hydrotherapy pool.

SGN

Two incoming natural gas supplies have been identified. One to the west of the school that appears to be dedicated to equipment within the teaching block (i.e. science/ home economics/ art). The other supply enters at the east elevation and serves the schools main heating and hot water plant. At the time of the construction of the swimming pool it appears that a branch of this gas supply has been extended to the swimming pool to serve the heating and hot water plant (including pool heating).

SSE

Record information show a high voltage ring entering the site from Sanquhar Road to the east and terminating in a SSE substation within the school. Although not identified on the record drawings a further substation exists to the rear of the swimming pool and assumed as installed at the time the swimming pool was constructed.

BT

The BT service enters the site off Sanquhar Road to the east. A separate branch connection has been installed directly to the swimming pool building from an external joint box.

Scottish Water-Mains Water

It is not entirely clear from record drawings where the mains water supply enters the school. Anticipated as being from the north side of the site but will need tested through future surveys. The mains water supply for the swimming pool extends from the main school connection and appears to be run through the existing school to the Pool block.

Drainage

It is assumed that the existing foul and surface water drains from the existing building are assumed to connect directly to the combined sewers on w and Sanquhar Roads, (subject to CCTV survey). It is assumed that any connections for the existing pool building will be retained as part of the development.

8.0 New Proposal Site Layout Options



8.1 Roysvale Park - Long List Site Organisation Options

Option 1a

Pros:

New secondary school location offers opportunity to develop 5-18 community campus.

New secondary school building located away from Common Good Land.

Pedestrian priority campus created by minimising vehicles in close proximity to school building

Dedicated bus/ coach drop off location, avoids road congestion

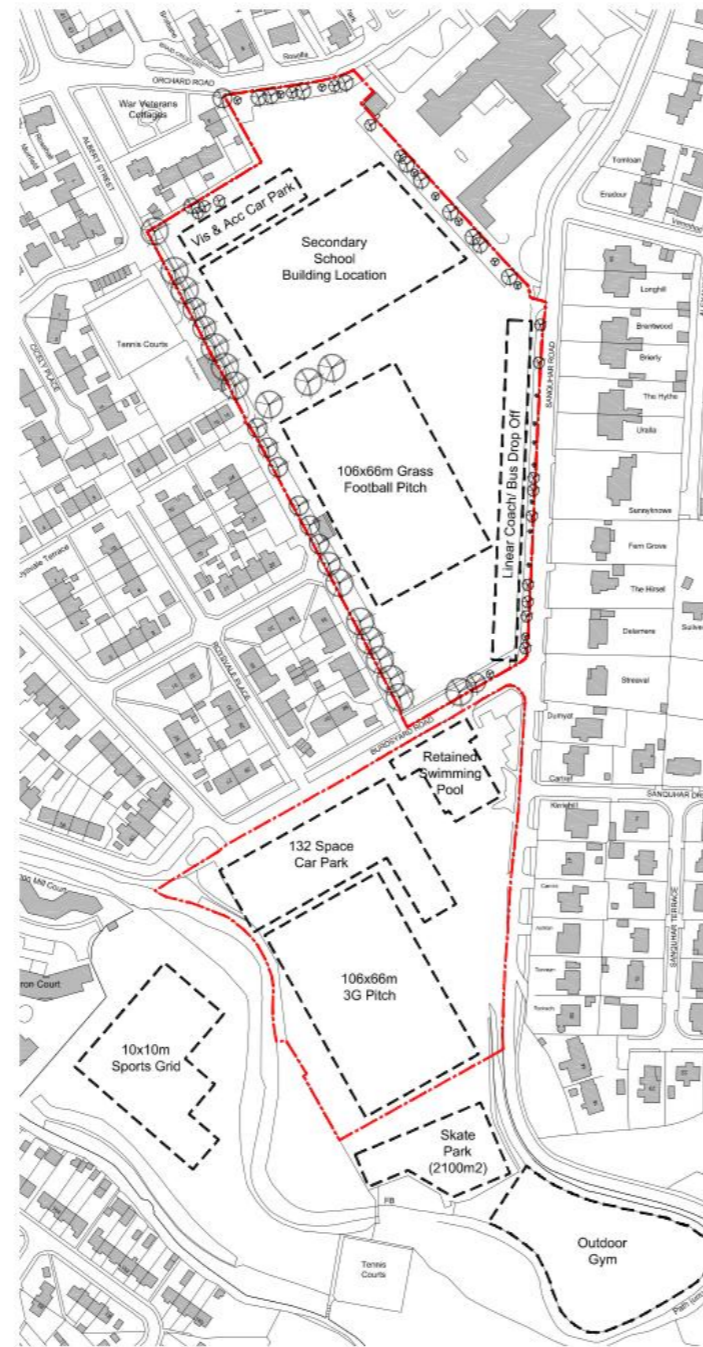
Dual functioning car park - serves both staff at school and swimming pool/ 3G pitch for community events.

Car park utilises existing access route.

Sports pavilion and grass pitch on Roysvale Park retained

Cons:

Car park and 3G pitch located on split site.



Option 1a

Option 1b

Pros:

New secondary school location offers opportunity to develop 5-18 community campus.

New secondary school building located away from Common Good Land.

Pedestrian priority campus created by minimising vehicles in close proximity to school building

Dedicated bus/ coach drop off location, avoids road congestion

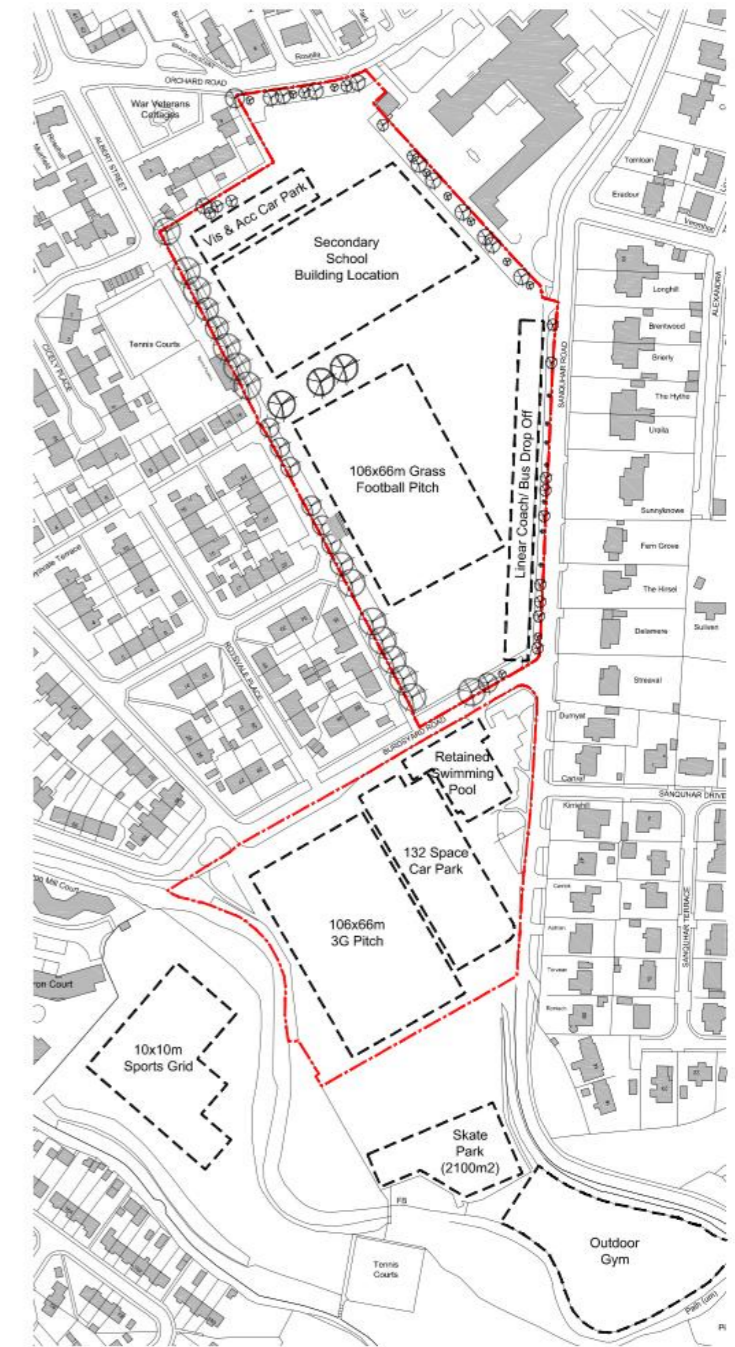
Dual functioning car park - serves both staff at school and swimming pool/ 3G pitch for community events.

Car park utilises existing access route.

Sports pavilion and grass pitch on Roysvale Park retained

Cons:

Car park and 3G pitch located on split site.



Option 1b

8.1 Roysvale Park - Long List Site Organisation Options

Option 1c

Pros:

New secondary school location offers opportunity to develop 5-18 community campus.

New secondary school building located away from Common Good Land.

Pedestrian priority campus created by minimising vehicles in close proximity to school building

Dedicated bus/ coach drop off location, avoids road congestion

Dual functioning car park - serves both staff at school and swimming pool/ 3G pitch for community events.

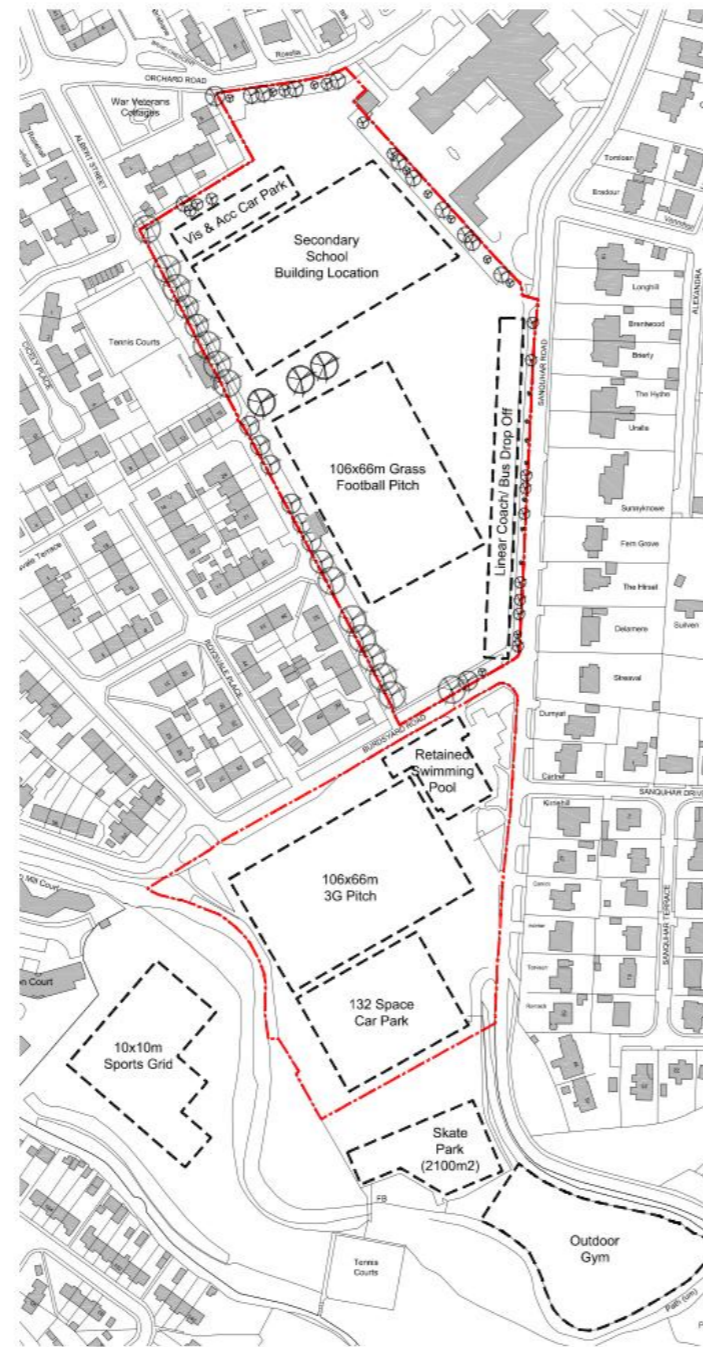
Car park utilises existing access route.

Sports pavilion and grass pitch on Roysvale Park retained

Cons:

Car park and 3G pitch located on split site.

3G pitch isolates car park from wider campus.



Option 1c

Option 2

Pros:

New secondary school location offers opportunity to develop 5-18 community campus.

New secondary school building located away from Common Good Land.

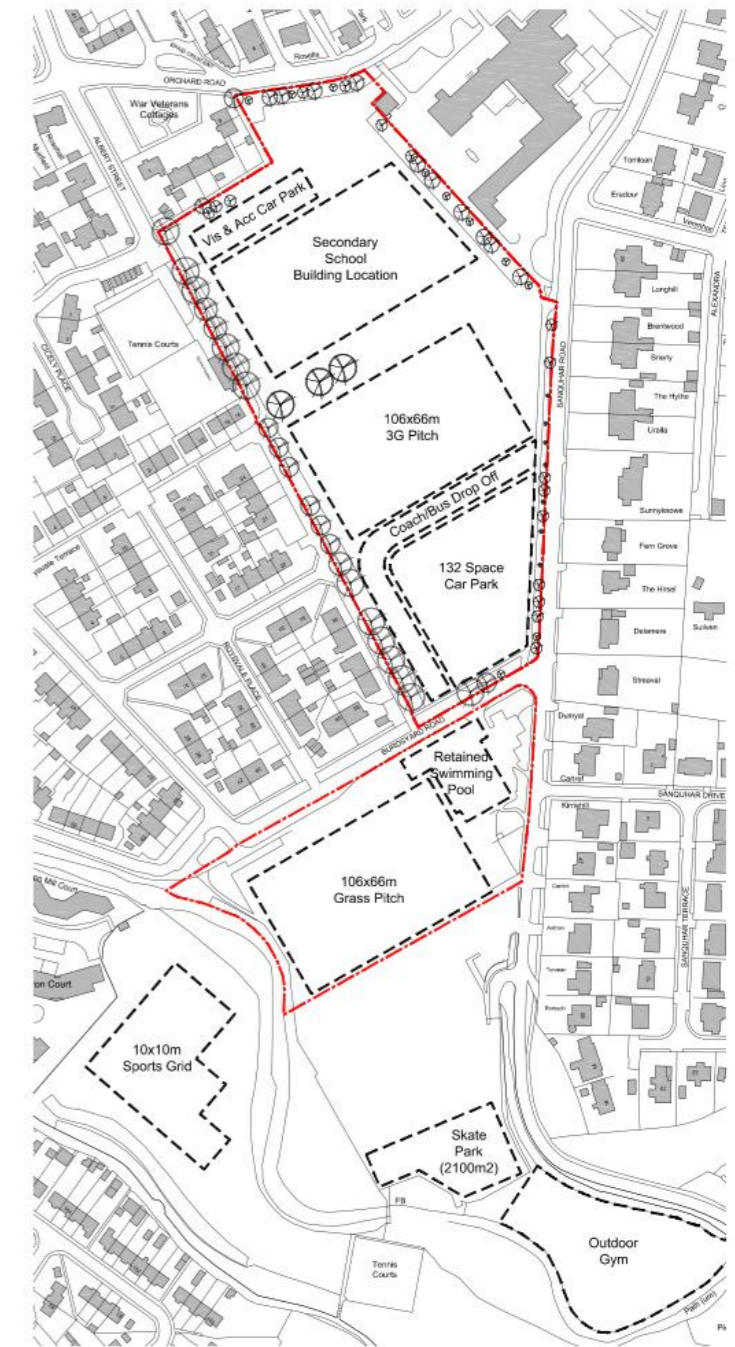
Dedicated bus/ coach drop off location, avoids road congestion

Car park in close proximity to school building.

Cons:

Car park and 3G pitch located on Common Good Land.

Loss of existing sports pavilion on Roysvale Park.



Option 2

8.1 Roysvale Park - Long List Site Organisation Options

Option 3

Pros:

New secondary school location (core teaching) offers opportunity to develop 5-18 community campus.

Co-location of sports facilities for education and community use.

Removing 'larger volume spaces' from core teaching allow the mass of the building to be reduced.

New secondary school building located away from Common Good Land.

Dedicated bus/ coach drop off location, avoids road congestion

Sports pavilion and grass pitch on Roysvale Park retained

Pedestrian priority campus created by minimising vehicles in close proximity to school building

Dual functioning car park - serves both staff at school and swimming pool/ 3G pitch for community events.

Car park utilises existing access route.

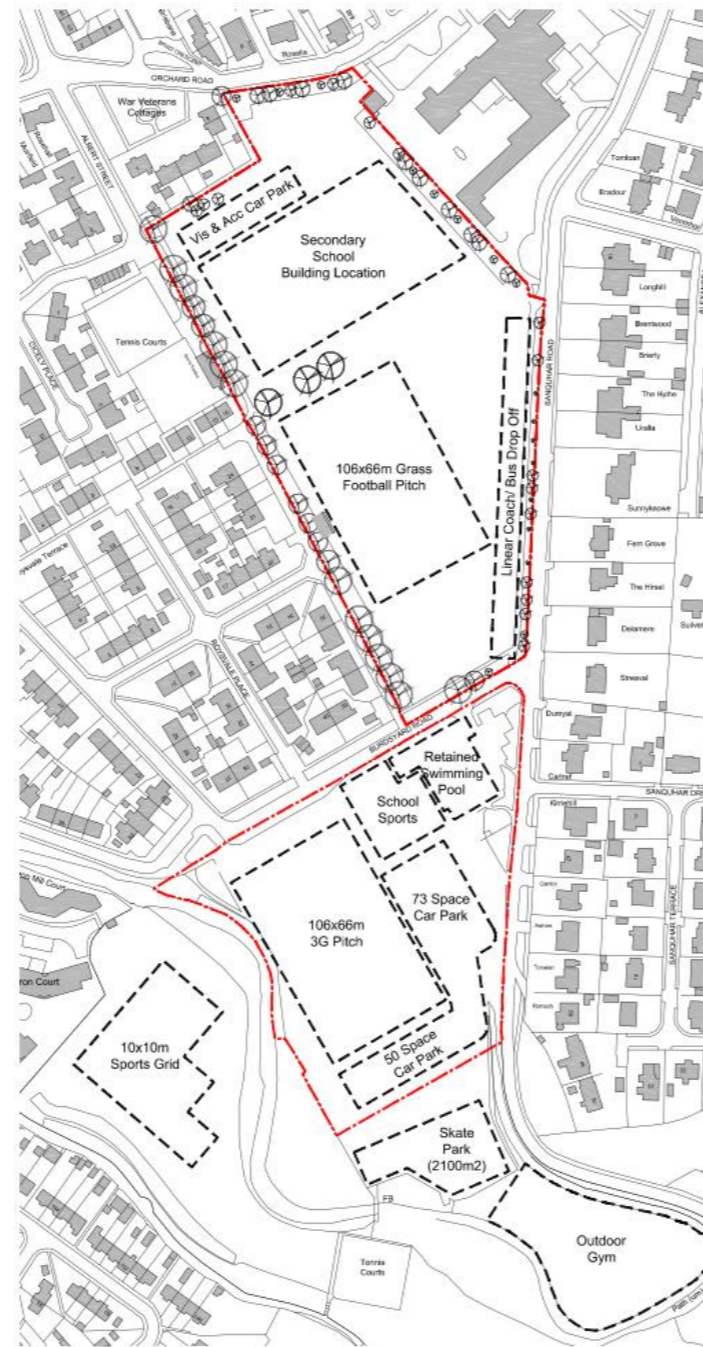
Cons:

Car park, 3G pitch and school indoor sports located on split site.

PE staff may feel isolated from wider school community.

Pupils required to walk to access to sports facilities, potentially impacting on amount of teaching time due to distance from main school building.

3G pitch and building isolates car park from wider campus.



Option 3

Option 4

Pros:

Proposed building location delivers good adjacencies to existing swimming pool and primary school.

Minimal disruption to Applegrove Primary School.

Dedicated bus/ coach drop off location, avoids road congestion

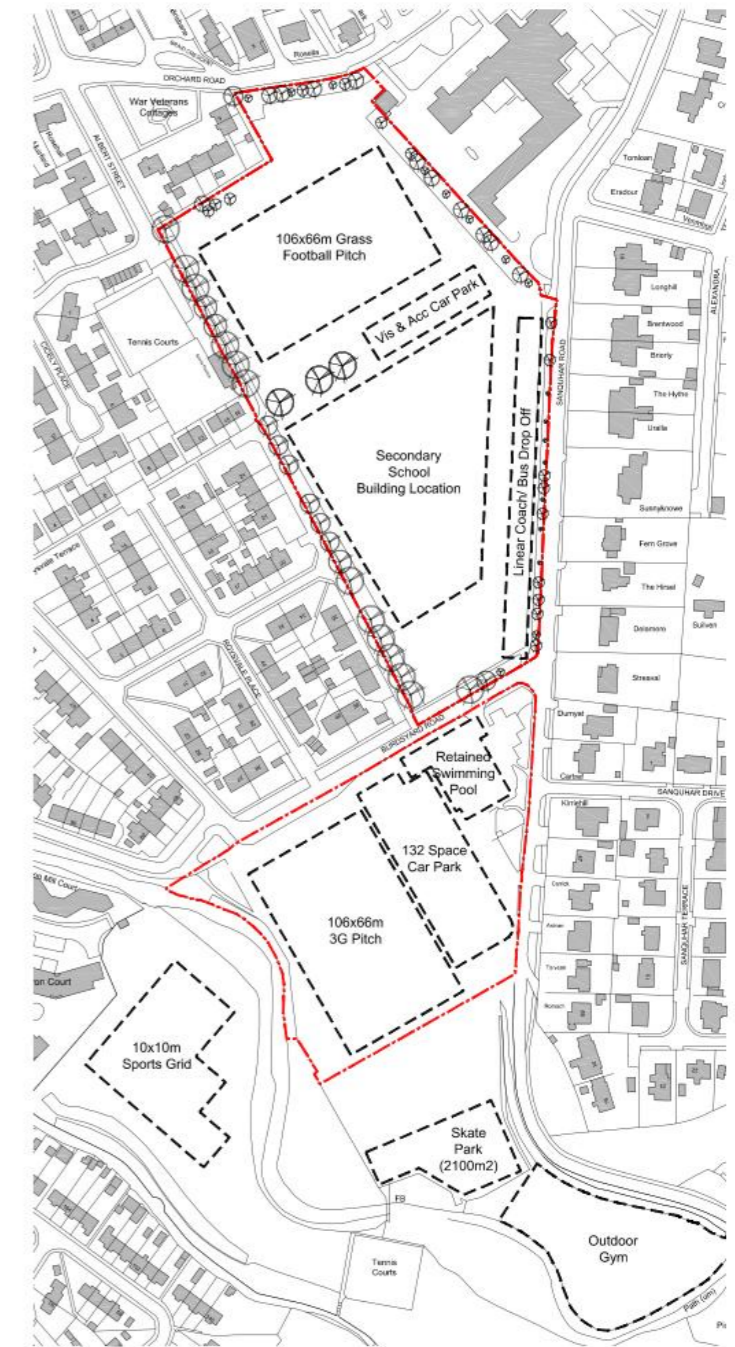
Car park in close proximity to school building.

Cons:

New secondary school located on Common Good Land.

Proposed building will be located further within the flood plain which may represent a challenge with respect to obtaining planning approval.

Loss of existing sports pavilion and grass pitch on Roysvale Park.



Option 4

8.2 Roysvale Park - Developed Site Organisation Option 1a

Development location for new secondary building (core teaching and sport facilities) with civic frontage onto Orchard Road.

Opportunity for 5-18 community and education campus to be developed with Applegrove Primary School.

Existing swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool and ancillary spaces (changing etc) retained.

Existing sports pavilion on Roysvale Park retained.

Proposed visitors and accessible car parking accessed from Orchard Road.

Proposed linear bus/ coach drop off layby running parallel to Sanquhar Road (access from Burdsyard Road, egress onto Sanquhar Rad).

Proposed school car park access and egress from existing opening on Sanquhar Road.

Existing grass football pitch and running track retained on Roysvale Park.

Proposed 3G 106x66m pitch located with close proximity to Forres Swimming Pool and proposed school car park.



8.3 Roysvale Park - Developed Site Organisation Option 1b

Development location for new secondary building (core teaching and sport facilities) with civic frontage onto Orchard Road.

Opportunity for 5-18 community and education campus to be developed with Applegrove Primary School.

Existing swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool and ancillary spaces (changing etc) retained.

Existing sports pavilion on Roysvale Park retained.

Proposed visitors and accessible car parking accessed from Orchard Road.

Proposed linear bus/ coach drop off layby running parallel to Sanquhar Road (access from Burdsyard Road, egress onto Sanquhar Rad).

Proposed school car park access and egress from existing opening on Sanquhar Road.

Existing grass football pitch and running track retained on Roysvale Park.

Proposed 3G 106x66m pitch located with close proximity to Forres Swimming Pool and proposed school car park.



8.4 Roysvale Park - Developed Site Organisation Option 3

Development location for new secondary building (core teaching) with civic frontage onto Orchard Road.

Opportunity for 5-18 community and education campus to be developed with Applegrove Primary School.

Existing swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool and ancillary spaces (changing etc) retained and enhanced with new indoor school sports accommodation construction on the existing school site, creating a education and community sports hub.

Existing sports pavilion on Roysvale Park retained.

Proposed visitors and accessible car parking accessed from Orchard Road.

Proposed linear bus/ coach drop off layby running parallel to Sanquhar Road (access from Burdsyard Road, egress onto Sanquhar Rad).

Proposed school car park access and egress from existing opening on Sanquhar Road.

Existing grass football pitch and running track retained on Roysvale Park.

Proposed 3G 106x66m pitch located with close proximity to Forres Swimming Pool, indoor sports facilities and proposed school car park.



8.5 Lochyhill / Enterprise Park - Developed Site Organisation Option

Development location for new secondary building (core teaching and sports facilities) with civic presence onto A96.

Existing swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool and ancillary spaces (changing etc) retained on Burdsyard Road.

Proposed vehicular access from Drumduan Road, including staff, visitor and accessible parking, bus/coach drop off and service access.

New grass football pitch and running track and 3G pitch.



8.6 Granttown Road - Developed Site Organisation Option

Development location for new secondary building (core teaching and sports facilities) with civic presence onto Granttown Road (A940).

Existing swimming pool, hydrotherapy pool and ancillary spaces (changing etc) retained on Burdsyard Road.

Proposed vehicular access from Granttown Road, including staff, visitor and accessible parking, bus/coach drop off and service access.

New grass football pitch and running track and 3G pitch.



9.0 Mechanical and Electrical



9.1 Energy and Carbon Strategy

The LEIP programme performance energy and carbon criteria, we believe sets the benchmark for all new schools irrespective of whether they are funded through the LEIP programme or through other funding routes.

The energy consumption target for Forres Academy is recommended to meet the LEIP Band A consumption target of 67 to 83 kWh/sqm/p.a when assessed under the LEIP calculation methodology. It should be noted that the LEIP energy consumption targets will not correlate directly with the total in-use energy consumption. We would propose a supplementary target of no more than 100 kWh /sqm/p.a “at the meter” making a reasonable allowance for community use of the facility.

Arguably the most significant energy consumption reductions can be realised by reducing heating demand. Passive design solutions that involve careful consideration of orientation, massing, thermal bridging, air infiltration rates and building envelope thermal performance will play a major role in the ability to meet energy performance targets and will form the initial focus in developing design proposals to deliver against the energy targets.

A recent addition in the LEIP Phase 3 metric is the introduction of embodied carbon targets that did not exist in the prior two phases.

The targets promote a collaborative approach by Designers and Contractors to address key topics such as:

- Local Sourcing
- Minimising Waste
- Efficient fabrication
- Use of Recycled material
- Material Selection
- Design and construction for future ease of dismantling and disposal/ re-use.

For further details in the approach to energy and carbon reduction please refer to Appendix G.

9.2 Mechanical and Electrical Design Strategy

The design of MEP systems will focus on efficiency, maintainability and simplicity of user controls.

The MEP services design will, at every stage, focus on minimising system losses through efficient placement of plant and equipment and understanding the opportunities to limit energy consumption and carbon emissions for example, minimising hot water storage and ductwork/ pipework/ cable lengths to minimise system energy losses.

The strategic approach to the engineering services for the new facility shall be founded on the following principals:

- Carbon efficient primary energy sources and desire to reduce/ remove reliance on fossil fuels.
- Recognise potential users of the facility (Education & Community Use) and the inter-relationship, operability & systems efficiency for varying operational and occupancy profiles.
- Provide an internal environment which is comfortable, safe, healthy and compatible with the operations associated with the facility.
- Develop solutions that are compatible with the Clients Brief for the project, taking cognisance of any budgetary constraints.
- Develop engineering services solutions that are simple in concept and in-use, reliable and robust in operation.
- Design engineering services plant, plant rooms and distribution systems with a focus on system efficiencies and minimising distribution losses.

- Develop environmental control strategy for summer and winter with the aim of simplistic implementation and low reliance on technology.
- Design engineering services plant, plant rooms and distribution systems taking account of the requirement to provide safe access/provision for maintenance, repair and replacement.
- Develop energy consumption monitoring strategy for each of the uses and major loads associated with the facility.

Please refer to Appendix G for further detail and initial outline elemental specification of MEP Systems in response to the strategic approach outlined above.

10.0 Structural And Civil



10.1 Structural Strategy

Structural Loading

Vertical loads on structures are dictated by the relevant design codes and standards in accordance with building use and occupancy classes. Environmental loads acting on the structures, both vertically and laterally will be assessed using a site-specific methodology. Typical imposed load values are shown in Table 1.

	UDL (kN/m ²)	Point Load (kN)
Roof (Maintenance access only/Snow)	0.6	0.6
Classrooms	3.0	3.0
Typical Floor	2.0	3.0
Corridor/ Stairs	3.0	4.5
Plant Rooms	7.5	4.5

Table 1

Material selection

Due to the varying types and sizes of structures, a suitability exercise should be carried out at an appropriate time to determine the best option for the development.

The below matrix gives a traffic light indication of the benefits of the main forms of construction to a project.

	Flexibility in Design	Future Flexibility	Services Optimisation	CO ₂	M&E Fit	Construction Programme
Steel Frame	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green
In-Situ Concrete	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
PT Concrete	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow
Traditional Masonry	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red
CLT/Timber	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green

Table 2

Of course, individual building layout plays a huge factor in this exercise as certain typical structural elements lend themselves well to specific situations, e.g. steel is well suited for large span openings typically found in education projects such as games halls and central atrium's.

Architectural features will also play a role in the material selection so early engagement between design team members is beneficial for agreeing the aspirations for the project.

Foundation Design

Through Site Investigation works geotechnical ground conditions will be established to allow a suitable foundation type to be determined – see the below matrix indicating the suitability for foundations when proposed with respective superstructure materials

Geo-environmental testing is carried out as part of the on-site suite of ground investigations and will inform the design relating to gas membranes, water supply pipe specification and determination of and contamination sources within the ground.

	Piled	Shallow (Pad/Strip)	Raft
Steel Frame	Green	Green	Red
Concrete Frame	Green	Green	Red
Masonry	Yellow	Green	Yellow
CLT/Timber	Yellow	Green	Green

Table 3

MMC (Modern methods of construction)

While off-site manufacturing (OSM) of structural elements has been a part of modern construction for a long time, there are now opportunities to expand on these elements for the benefit of the entirety of the project.

Typical OSM elements include pre-cast concrete or roof trusses which historically provide a higher quality product, constructed to tighter tolerances than on-site manufacturing.

With appropriate lead-times accounted for in the programme, delivery of fully or partially erected structural elements can also present an on-site time saving.

Sustainability

Modern construction methods must also consider the environment, via both carbon offsetting and carbon footprint reduction. Reductions in footprint are the preferred method of minimising emissions and are achieved through consideration in terms of both embodied carbon as a result of manufacturing and also as a result of transport to site. Carbon offsetting is seen as the less preferred option and only used once all other practical measures are taken. The aspirational hierarchy for net zero structural design is shown in Figure 1.

Stability

Whether utilising a framed or a shear wall structural solution, a regular and vertically repetitive layout with allows for an efficient design of stability members.

Where stability members can positively transfer the horizontal loads from the floor and roof diaphragms into the foundations in a single vertical line, the need for transfer members can be avoided.

Repetitive structure also encourages development of details which can be specified across multiple areas, simplifying manufacturing/ construction and building confidence through usage.

Further site investigation information can be found under Appendix E.

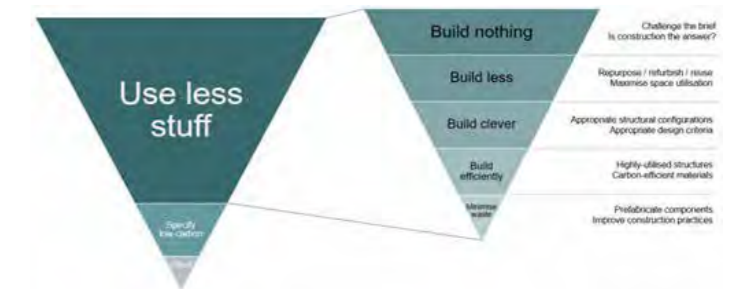


Figure 1. Aspirational hierarchy for net zero structural design

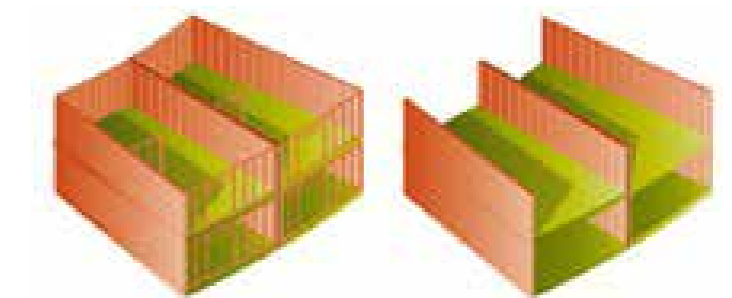


Figure 2. Shear wall structural solution

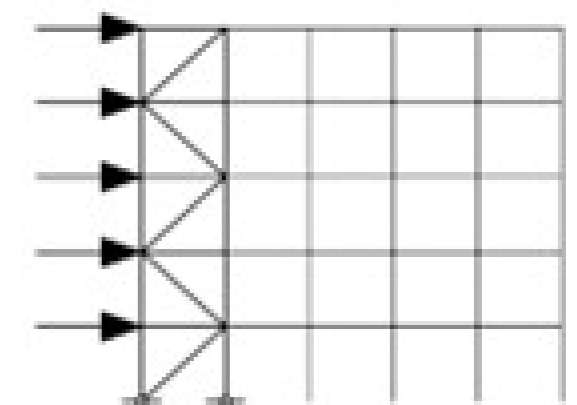


Figure 3. Shear wall structural solution

10.2 Civil Strategy

SUDS

The main impact of a development is increasing the proportion of impermeable surfaces (e.g., roofs and paved areas) within the site, without careful planning this can increase peak rate runoff. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) aim to mitigate this effect by emulating natural drainage systems and the provision of storage.

The greenfield runoff rate for Roysvale Park has been used to estimate the attenuation volume required for all three sites. Based on this greenfield run off rate, it is estimated approximately 1250m³ of storage will be required to store the 1:200 year storm with 37% climate change. However, this volume is correlated to total area of proposed hard standing, therefore, it is subject to change based on the architects layout. Furthermore, depending on the layout, there is a possibility of capturing the 1:200 year +37% C/C rainfall event on site which would reduce the total attenuation volume.

The primary method of attenuation will be provided by below ground attenuation tanks as it is anticipated that options such as SUDS basins and ponds will not be viable for this site due to their large land take.

Treatment

Treatment must be provided in accordance with the recommendations of The SUDS Manual (CIRIA Document C753), SEPA and other relevant guidance. To determine surface water treatment requirements, The SUDS Manual (CIRIA Document C753) initially requires identification of the various land use classifications involved in the development. Using Table 4.3 (Page 63), the following classifications are considered relevant for all three sites:

- Non-residential parking with infrequent change (e.g. schools, offices, < 300 traffic movements a day)
- Commercial/Industrial roofing: Inert materials

The guidance confirms that the various land use classifications identified require use of the Simple Index Approach. This involves a comparison between indices of likely pollution levels against SUDS performance capacities. To deliver adequate treatment, the selected SUDS components should have a total pollution mitigation that equals or exceeds the pollution hazard index. There are several options for treatment, however, the best choice will need to consider the site constraints and space available. For this reason, it is anticipated that options such as SUDS basins and ponds will not be viable for this site due to their large land take.

As such, options such as porous paving, filter strips and linear swales which can be accommodated within the landscaping will be preferred.

Connections

All surface water and foul connections require approval by Scottish water. Scottish Water's preference for surface Water are as follows:

1. Re-use
2. Soak-away
3. Watercourse
4. Surface water sewer
5. Combined sewer

The sites in question for Forres use a variance of these options; Roysvale – Combined sewer, Lochyhill/ Enterprise – Surface water sewer and Grantown – watercourse. These connection methods may vary depending on Scottish Water approval.

Foul connections for all sites will be to either nearby combined sewers or foul water sewers. Scottish Water approval required prior to connection.

Further site investigation information can be found under Appendix E.

11.0 Programme



11.1 Programme Commentary

The programmes contained within Appendix H and the commentary below reflect the timescales required based on the Hub procurement model. Should an alternative procurement route to Hub be adopted it should be noted that this will result in a minimum 6 months extension required to procure and engage a new Design Team as well as potential financial impacts.

Should the decision be made to proceed with a Hub procurement model the new school at Forres is to be delivered as part of the LEIP 3 Northern Schools Programme managed by hub North Scotland Limited. This programme looks to provide a collaborative and aligned approach delivering:

- shared knowledge and resources,
- establishing replicable designs with associated cost savings,
- accelerating the understanding and application of the funding conditions,
- maximising economic and social benefits,
- monitoring and implementing lessons learned,
- alignment with the 10 guiding principles of the National Learning Strategy, and
- supporting wider collaboration with other services and public partners.

The programme aims to deliver:

- Capital cost benefits, by ensuring a steady and predictable work-stream for the local market, promoting supply chain development and enhance buying gains, delivering projects faster
- Operational cost benefits, by creating opportunities for co-location of facilities, reducing build and running costs leading to lower carbon emissions providing better places for businesses and communities to work and meet.

- Socio-economic benefits, by evidencing a steady pipeline of work in the region which would allow new employment opportunities to be created locally within the supply chain. With more confidence in workload, the supply chain could widen their apprenticeships to the local communities. Sustained employment in the region would result in growth to the local economy. In addition, the sharing and pooling of resources will also cause a ripple effect, allowing different ways of collaborative working to be embraced and benefits to be gained, such as knowledge sharing and upskilling
- Non-financial benefits, by reducing development time across projects with a consistent approach. Suites of standard firm of building contracts, specifications and technical documentation can be developed, reducing the production time-scales for creating bespoke information. The time savings will result in projects being delivered earlier compared to being developed in isolation. The time saving is in addition to the cost saving that would also be realised.

The LEIP 3 North Schools Programme Partners include:

- Aberdeen City Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- Moray Council
- Orkney Islands Council
- Shetland Islands Council, along with
- Northern Alliance
- Scottish Futures Trust and
- Hub North Scotland Limited

12.0 Cost Appraisal



12.1 Cost Commentary

Currie and Brown have prepared high level Cost Models for the developed site options for Forres Academy. The costs for these options are as per Table 1.

The main differences between the various cost options are as follows, utilising Roysvale Park (Option 1a) as the base line for comparison purposes only:

- Roysvale Park (Option 1b) – smaller development site and reduced extent of access roads
- Roysvale Park (Option 3) – separate sports block from main school building constructed on footprint of existing school and associated extended programme.
- Lochyhill – roundabout on A96, increased allowance for safer routes to schools and land purchase
- Granton Road – trenchfill to foundations, off-site junction works at new school entrance, increased allowance for safer routes to schools and land purchase.

We would also highlight the following which forms the basis of the Cost Models:

- Building costs based on Currie & Brown benchmarking.
- Allowances included for refurbishment works at junction to retained swimming pool following demolition of existing school.
- External works surfacing etc based on approximate quantities based on Architects Landscape Layouts
- Allowances included for ground works ie cut and fill, trenchfill etc with requirement /extent to be confirmed once further Site Investigation undertaken.
- Allowance included for fencing, site furniture,

external service connections including electrical sub-stations.

- Preliminaries based on amended hNSL pro-forma percentages to reflect extended programme and current market conditions.
- Contractor's margin, Design Team fees based on hNSL pro-forma percentages.
- Design development risk based on percentages reflective of current Scottish market.
- LEIP 2 and LEIP 3 targets based on SFT percentage uplifts.
- Inflation included to mid-construction based on BCIS indices and Currie & Brown's Construction Activity & Market Outlook. Due to the BCIS's heavy reliance on cost data for the other regions of the UK and also due to the delay / lag in BCIS receiving cost information, in our opinion Currie and Brown's inflation outlook is more reflective of the current Scottish Market.
- Construction duration / programme assumes 183 weeks (209 weeks for Roysvale – Option 3)
- Allowances included for Authority costs ie internal costs, legal costs / fees, IT active equipment, interactive boards / screens etc.
- Authority cost for optimism bias / Client contingency based on percentage.
- Authority costs include high level cost allowances for off-site works ie safer routes to schools, roundabouts, land purchase etc where applicable to each option.

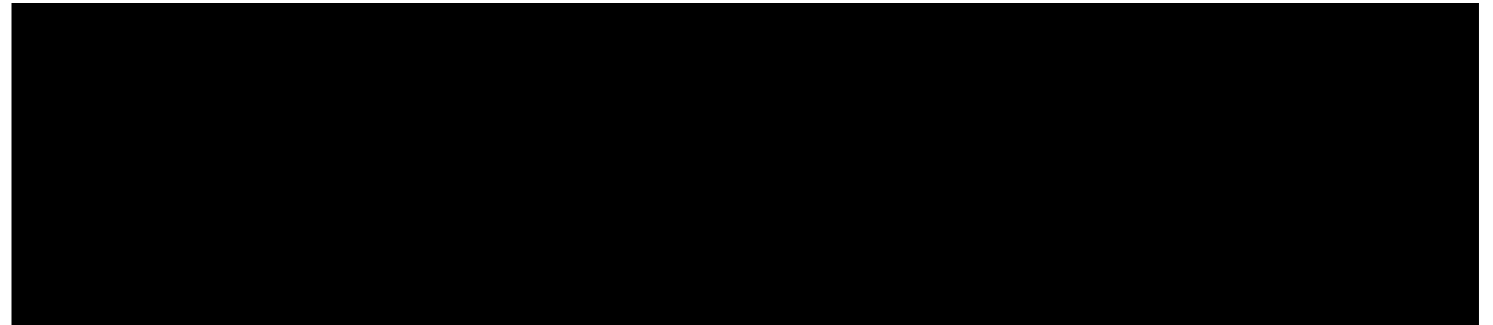


Table 1 - Cost Models

13.0 Recommendations and Next Steps



13.1 Recommendations

To assist Moray Council in determining the most appropriate site for building the new school, the Design Team members including hub North Scotland Ltd, and a representative from Moray Council all participated in an “options appraisal” exercise looking at varied criteria pertaining to the three sites (Roysvale Park, Lochyhill and Granttown Road), all of which were scored jointly and collectively by the Design Team members; the outcome of the options appraisal was that Roysvale Park received the highest score.

Whilst there are risks associated with developing any of the three sites, it was noted however that only one of the sites (Roysvale Park) is under ownership of Moray Council, whereas both Lochyhill and Granttown Road would require the Council to formally acquire the land in question. The major risk with developing the Roysvale site, however, lies with the fact that a major part of the developable site is classed as “Common Good” and hence Moray Council would need to be confident that they, and their legal advisers, are able to remove said restrictions in a timeous manner during the design development phase of the project in time to allow the main Contractor to commence works on site in accordance with the project programme.

If Moray Council is confident that the Common Good constraint can be removed prior to commencement of construction on site (July 2025), then the recommendation would be that Roysvale Park would offer the best site solution for Moray Council to deliver the new school.



Aerial view of Roysvale Park

13.2 Next Steps

The following ‘Next Steps’ are based on the assumption that approval to proceed with Roysvale Park as the preferred site, under a Hub procurement route, is received.

Following the submission of this SSPS Report and approval to proceed, the development programme included in Appendix H proposes commencement of Hub Stage 1 (RIBA Stage 2) at the end of March 2024. This stage runs for a seven month period, concluding at the end of October. Hub Stage 2 will follow on sequentially, concluding at the end of July 2025.

Northern Schools Programme Approach

Forres Academy is to be delivered as part of the LEIP 3 Northern Schools Programme managed by hub North Scotland Limited. This programme looks to provide a collaborative and aligned approach and will follow the steps below:

1. Initial Goal Teams to be established with initial workshops to be set up w/c 8th Jan 2024
 1. Place
 2. Net Zero
 3. Inclusive Social Outcomes
 4. Technical Collaboration
 5. Procurement
2. Programme Wide Strategies. Supply Chain Members to confirm contributors
3. Phase 1 strategies and mini-programmes to be established

Common Good Land Review

It has been identified that part of the overall site at Roysvale Park has been designated as Common Good and as such presents additional risk to the project. The proposed location for the new secondary school building is on land to the

north of the footpath that dissects the site, and is therefore not directly located on Common Good Land. However it is currently proposed to use the Common Good Land temporarily during construction as site setup and the contractor’s compound and permanently as a drop off layby for buses and a grass sports pitch. The land designation may need to be reviewed as part of the project development.

Additional Surveys Required

To help support the Design Team’s work and statutory approvals during Hub Stages 1 and 2, the following surveys may be required:

- Ground Penetrating Radar Survey
- CCTV Drainage Survey
- Parking Survey
- Transport Statement
- Tree Survey and Reports
- Ecology and Habitat
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Asbestos Survey (if not available, for current building)
- Intrusive Testing Tracing Surveys (existing building, by MEP subcontractor)

Stakeholder Engagement

The initial stakeholder engagement which has been undertaken during SSPS Phases A and B will be built upon and developed throughout Hub Stages 1 and 2.

Statutory (and other) Consultations

The Design Team have already engaged in some light touch discussions with the Planning and Roads and Transport departments and would look

to further these discussions during Hub Stage 1.

As the Forres Academy project will be classed as a Major Development under The Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009, the formal Planning Application will be subject to a 12 week pre-application process.

Following the submission of the Planning Application information will be prepared to enable an application for Building Warrant however, engagement with the Building Control Team will occur prior to this to introduce the project, team and agree the proposed Building Warrant stages.

The Design Team will also make contact with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to discuss the project with their Fire Safety Enforcement Officer and engage in details discussions which will assist with the Building Warrant process.

Should it be deemed a requirement by Moray Council, the Design Team can also meet with the Architectural Liaison Officer from Police Scotland to discuss Secured by Design.

As all of the proposed options for Roysvale Park in this report would be deemed a ‘relevant proposal’ (a proposal to relocate a school or part of a school) under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, Moray Council will commence engagement, during the next stage, with His Majesty’s Inspectors of Education (HMIE) and prepare an Educational Benefits Statement to support the chosen proposal in line with the requirements set out in the Act.

14.0 Appendices



Appendix A - Consultation Summary

Appendix B - The Education Brief, Adjacencies & Schedule of Accommodation

Appendix C - Existing Utilities Report

Appendix D - High Level Site Constraints Report

Appendix E - Site Investigations Report

Appendix F - Site Appraisals Assessment

Appendix G - Energy and Carbon Strategy

Appendix H - Programme

Appendix J - Cost Appraisal

jmarchitects

www.jmarchitects.net
info@jmarchitects.net

64 Queen Street
Edinburgh, EH2 4NA
edinburgh@jmarchitects.net
t 0131 464 6100

12 Great Portland Street
London, W1W 8QN
london@jmarchitects.net
t 0207 580 5330

54 Princess Street
Manchester, M1 6HS
manchester@jmarchitects.net
t 0161 200 6300

50 Bell Street
Glasgow, G1 1LQ
glasgow@jmarchitects.net
t 0141 333 3920



Forres Academy Location Survey (Paper Copy)

Background

Further to the Education, Children's and Leisure Service committee held on 27 March, it was agreed that the next step for the Forres Academy project is to engage with the community regarding the site selection for the new build. There are two site options remaining following the committee meeting: Lochyhill and Applegrove/ Roysvale.

Whilst there are risks associated with developing either of these sites, it was noted that only Applegrove/Roysvale Park is under ownership of the Council, whilst Lochyhill would require the Council to formally acquire the land in question. The main risk with developing the Applegrove/Roysvale site lies with the fact that a major part of the developable site is classed as 'Common Good', although the main school building is not planned on this site but rather the Council-owned land adjacent to Applegrove Primary School and currently used as grass playing fields by them. The cost for developing the Lochyhill site is up to £4m more than the Applegrove/ Roysvale site. More detailed information about the new school build can be found by scanning the QR code below.

This short survey seeks your views on these two sites for the location of the Forres Academy new build. The survey should take no longer than 5 minutes to complete. **This survey will close on 25 April 2024.**

This paper copy should be returned to either Forres Post Office or Forres Library no later than the closing date.

QR Code





Forres Academy Location Survey (Paper Copy) Questions

The map shows the locations of the two sites:



* 1. Which site location would you prefer?

- Lochyhill
- Applegrove / Roysvale

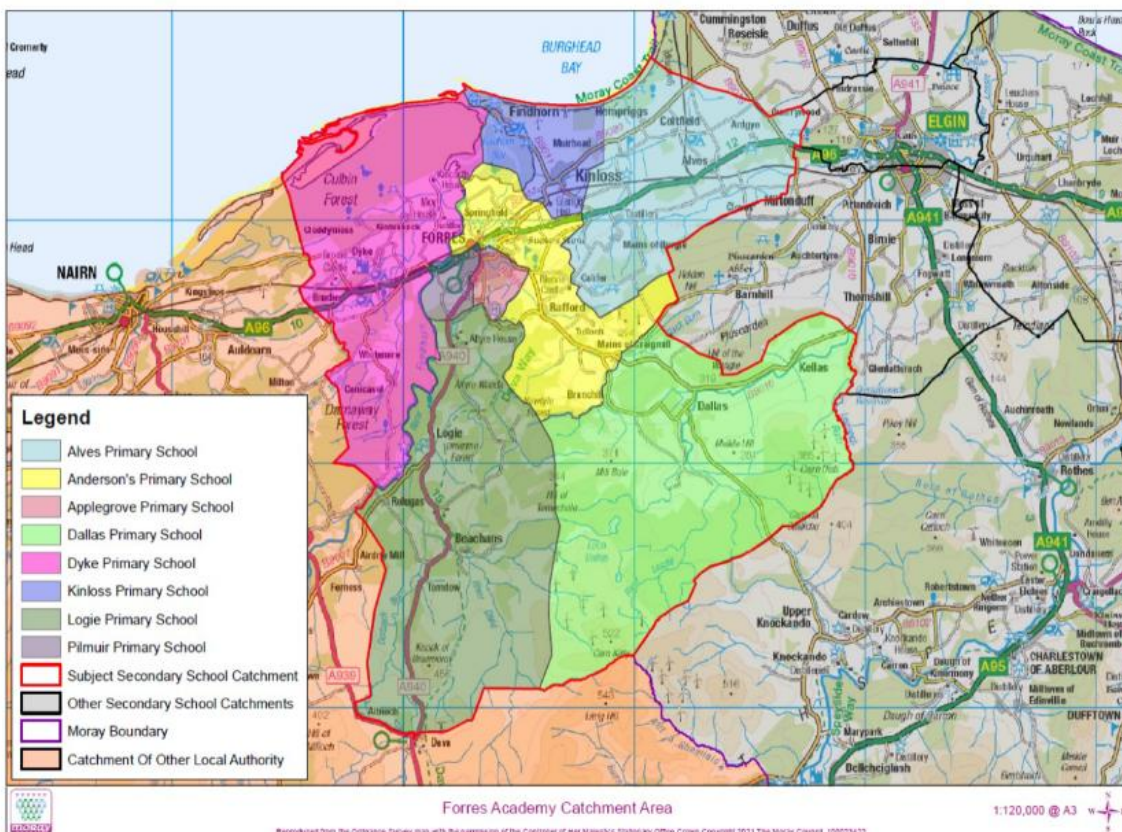
* 2. Please provide your reasons for choosing this location

* 3. Please confirm whether you are...(Select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer of a child attending school | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school pupil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local resident living within Associated School Group (ASG) area. | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary school staff member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary school pupil | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school staff member |

Other (please specify)

Forres Associated School Group (ASG) Primary School catchment areas



* 4. In which school catchment area do you live?

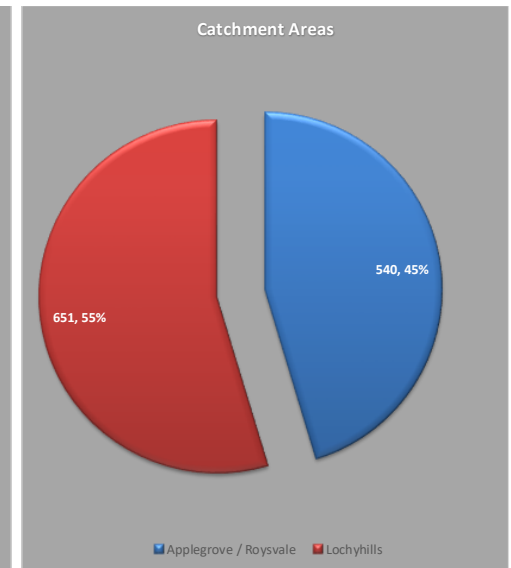
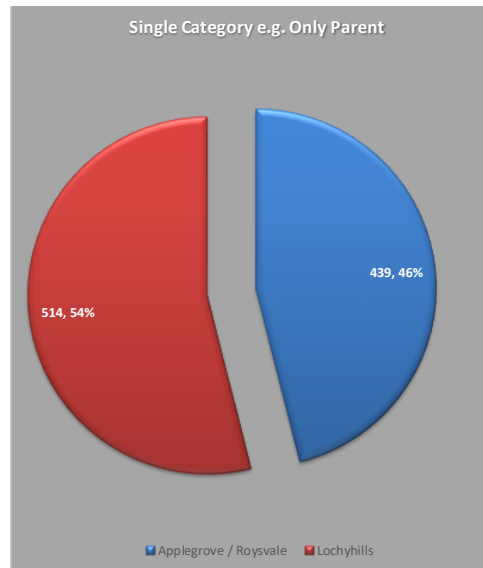
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Alves Primary School | <input type="radio"/> Kinloss Primary School |
| <input type="radio"/> Anderson's Primary School | <input type="radio"/> Logie Primary School |
| <input type="radio"/> Applegrove Primary School | <input type="radio"/> Pilmuir Primary School |
| <input type="radio"/> Dallas Primary School | <input type="radio"/> I live out with ASG area |
| <input type="radio"/> Dyke Primary School | |

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your views are important to us and will help to inform the planned development.

Appendix 3 – Forres Academy Site Selection

Public Engagement - Online Survey Analysis

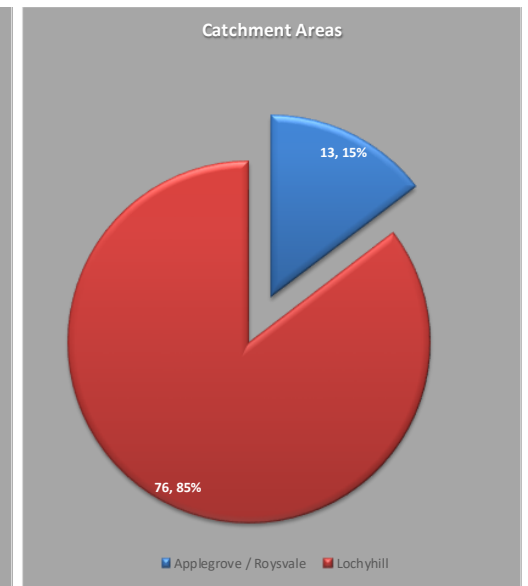
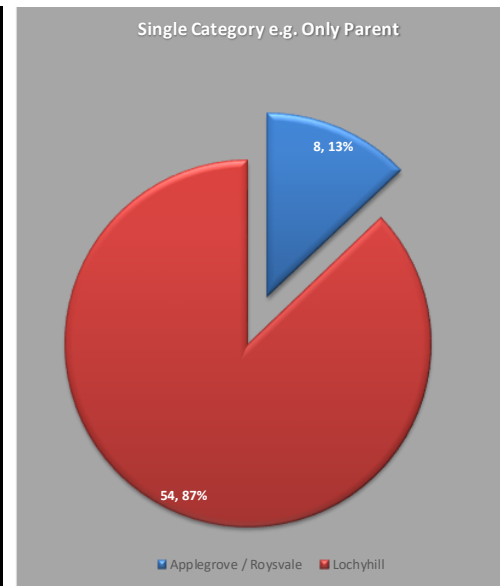
	Numbers		%		
	Applegrove / Roysvale	Lochyhills	Applegrove / Roysvale	Lochyhills	
Single Category e.g. Only Parent	Parent/Carer of a child attending school	172	158	52.1%	47.9%
	Local resident living within Associated School Group (ASG) area	140	227	38.1%	61.9%
	Primary school pupil	23	16	59.0%	41.0%
	Secondary school pupil	22	29	43.1%	56.9%
	Primary school staff member	4	8	33.3%	66.7%
	Secondary school staff member	11	18	37.9%	62.1%
	Other	67	58	53.6%	46.4%
	TOTAL	439	514	46.1%	53.9%
	Alves Primary School	7	17	29.2%	70.8%
	Anderson's Primary School	119	94	55.9%	44.1%
Applegrove Primary School	197	321	38.0%	62.0%	
Dallas Primary School	9	4	69.2%	30.8%	
Dyke Primary School	18	21	46.2%	53.8%	
Kinloss Primary School	26	53	32.9%	67.1%	
Logie Primary School	11	12	47.8%	52.2%	
Pilmuir Primary School	122	98	55.5%	44.5%	
I live out with ASG area	31	31	50.0%	50.0%	
TOTAL	540	651	45.3%	54.7%	
Living in Applegrove Catchment + Resident	76	195	28.0%	72.0%	
Living in Applegrove Catchment + Parent	107	133	44.6%	55.4%	



Appendix 4 – Forres Academy Site Selection

Public Engagement - Paper Survey Analysis

		Numbers		%	
		Applegrove / Roysvale	Lochyhill	Applegrove / Roysvale	Lochyhills
Single Category e.g. Only Parent	Parent/Carer of a child attending school	3	20	13.0%	87.0%
	Local resident living within Associated School Group (ASG) area	4	33	10.8%	89.2%
	Primary school pupil	0	1	0.0%	100.0%
	Secondary school pupil	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
	Primary school staff member	1	0	100.0%	0.0%
	Secondary school staff member	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
	Other	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
	TOTAL	8	54	12.9%	87.1%
	Alves Primary School	0	1	0.0%	100.0%
	Anderson's Primary School	4	19	17.4%	82.6%
Applegrove Primary School	3	32	8.6%	91.4%	
Dallas Primary School	0	1	0.0%	100.0%	
Dyke Primary School	1	2	33.3%	66.7%	
Kinloss Primary School	2	4	33.3%	66.7%	
Logie Primary School	0	1	0.0%	100.0%	
Pilmuir Primary School	2	15	11.8%	88.2%	
I live out with ASG area	1	1	50.0%	50.0%	
TOTAL	13	76	14.6%	85.4%	
Living in Applegrove Catchment + Resident		2	30	6.3%	93.8%
Living in Applegrove Catchment + Parent		1	3	25.0%	75.0%





REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 22 MAY 2024

**SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: MORAY GROWTH DEAL
ANNUALREPORT**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 On 6 March 2024 Council considered and approved (para 14 of the minute refers) a draft version of the Moray Growth Deal (MGD) Annual Report, covering the 2023 calendar year.
- 1.2 Delegated authority was given to the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) to approve a final iteration. **Appendix 1** tracks changes made to the version presented to Elected Members on 6 March 2024.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section (II) (20) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to a new policy matter which does not fall within the terms of reference of any Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The production of an annual report is a grant condition associated with funding from the Scottish and UK Governments. This report introduces a final version of the MGD's second annual report, covering the 2023 calendar year.
- 2.2 Since the Council meeting on 6 March 2024, the draft Annual Report document was used as the basis for the Deal's annual conversation with officials from the Scottish and UK Governments.
- 2.3 The Annual Conversation was a constructive day of activity for the Growth Deal and involved:
 - Informal 'showcase' sessions that provided an early sight of applications the Digital Health project is developing along with a visit to sites in Elgin that are due to be regenerated.

- A formal meeting in the afternoon saw officials meet with the Moray Council's Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance and Growth Deal Senior Responsible Officer), Head of Economic Growth and Development, Chief Financial Officer and the Moray Growth Deal Programme Manager. The discussion reflected on activity progressed during 2023, with a look ahead to what is planned for 2024.

3. **NEXT STEPS**

3.1 Following submission to the Council, the intention is that:

- A graphically designed version of the annual report (draft version provided in **Appendix 2**) will be made publicly available through the Council and My Moray websites.
- A press release will be issued to promote key highlights in early June.

4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

Moray Growth Deal projects contribute to the Corporate Plan priority of promoting economic development and growth, whilst meeting the LOIP vision of raising aspirations, reducing inequalities in educational attainment, providing access to employment, expanding choices for residents, and improving livelihood and well-being.

(b) Policy and Legal

Each MGD project has been developed to meet local, regional and national policy agendas in line with legal requirements where relevant.

(c) Financial implications

The production of the 2023 Moray Growth Deal annual report in itself does not present any financial implications, but it does contain a section relating to the finances of the programme.

With an increasing number of projects either in delivery or in the advanced stages of developing their full business cases, it is expected that during the first half of 24/25 there will be more certainty around the financial profile for the remaining 7 years of the Deal. This in turn will allow Finance to understand cash flow requirements that the Council have committed to cover about the Government funding profile. Specifically, it will determine how much of the £4m currently held in reserves will be required.

The Council's Chief Financial Officer sits on the monthly Moray Growth Deal Programme Board at which a report is submitted for review setting out spend against budget allocation and takes an overview of the financial implications of the Deal for the Council as s95 Officer.

(d) Risk Implications

The production of the 2023 Moray Growth Deal annual report in itself does not present any risk implications, but it does reference risks being managed by the Moray Growth Deal PMO that have the potential to affect successful delivery.

Risk is a standing item at monthly Moray Growth Deal Programme Boards and is covered in meetings that the PMO has with each Project Manager.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

Equalities and socio impact assessments for each project will be updated as part of full business case development and any subsequent, significant change control activity.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

As part of their review process with the Governments, Growth Deal projects need to take account of carbon and environmental considerations in full business cases, with net zero aspirations being integrated into design briefs for new properties.

(i) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Economic Growth and Development, the Legal Services Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer the Chief Financial Officer and Democratic Services Manager have been consulted and comments received have been incorporated into the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 This paper provides a final draft of the Moray Growth Deal's 2023 Annual report for the Council to consider and note.

Author of Report: Michael Kelly Moray Growth Deal Programme Manager

Background Papers:

- a) [Full deal documentation \(December 2021\)](#)
- b) [Approval of procurement requirements prior to the Housing Mix Delivery FBC being approved](#)
- c) [Acquisition of property relating to South Street redevelopment activity \(relating to both the Housing Mix Delivery and Business Enterprise Hub projects\)](#)
- d) Moray Growth Deal 21/22 annual report ([8 March 2023](#) and [24 May 2023](#))
- e) [Approval of MICM FBC](#)
- f) [Approval of Business Enterprise Hub and Housing Mix Delivery FBCs](#)
- g) Moray Growth Deal 2023 annual report ([6 March 2024](#))

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023





Moray
 Council
Cultural Quarter
 The Cultural Quarter will be a new hub for the town of Moray, bringing together a mix of cultural, creative and community spaces. It will be a place where people can enjoy a range of activities, from art and music to sports and leisure. The project is a key part of the town's regeneration and will help to create a vibrant and sustainable community.

Cultural Quarter
 The Cultural Quarter will be a new hub for the town of Moray, bringing together a mix of cultural, creative and community spaces. It will be a place where people can enjoy a range of activities, from art and music to sports and leisure. The project is a key part of the town's regeneration and will help to create a vibrant and sustainable community.

Cultural Quarter
 The Cultural Quarter will be a new hub for the town of Moray, bringing together a mix of cultural, creative and community spaces. It will be a place where people can enjoy a range of activities, from art and music to sports and leisure. The project is a key part of the town's regeneration and will help to create a vibrant and sustainable community.

Cultural Quarter Consultation at Elgin Library

Contents

1	Headline achievements	2
2	Statement from Moray Council's Growth Deal Lead	3
3	Progress made throughout 2023	4
	Programme overview	4
3.1.1	Summary of what the Deal is working to achieve	4
3.1.2	Status of Deal activity	5
3.1.3	Anticipated geographical spread of benefits	6
3.1.4	Synergies between Growth Deal activity and other economic development funding secured for Moray	7
	Project updates	8
3.2.1	Bus Revolution	8
3.2.2	Business Enterprise Hub	14
3.2.3	Cultural Quarter	18
3.2.4	Digital Health	23
3.2.5	Early Years STEM	28
3.2.6	Housing Mix Delivery	34
3.2.7	MAATIC	38
3.2.8	MICM	41
4	Forward look at activity planned for 2024	45
4.1	Work to get all Growth Deal projects into delivery	45
4.2	PMO milestones to be achieved	46
4.3	Factors that require action or future delivery could be impacted	47
4.4	Monitoring the benefits to be realised by the Deal	47
5	Financial summary	48
5.2	Funding sources for Deal activity	48
5.2	Funding drawn down from the Scottish and UK Governments Q4 22/23 to Q3 23/24	50
6	2023 communications activity	51
7	Programme structure and governance activity	53
7.1	Structure of Moray Growth Deal activity and Officers involved	53
7.2	Summary of assurance activity progressed during 2023	55
7.3	Audit activity undertaken during 2023	58

1. Headline achievements

- Bus Revolution project receives Council and Government clearance to enter delivery.

**Q4
22/23**

- Digital Health's Demonstration, Simulation and Environment (DSE) Space opens in UHI-Moray, providing a location for residents, digital developers and health care professionals to collaborate on healthcare digital applications.
- Fraser Livingstone Architects appointed to design phase 1 of the Dallas Dhu (Forres) housing masterplan.
- Enhanced on demand bus services take to the road, rebranded as m.connect.

**Q1
23/24**

- Moray Growth Deal Board approves full business cases for the Business Enterprise Hub, Housing Mix Delivery and MICM projects, enabling them to move to the next stage of scrutiny by Government Policy Advisors and Moray Council.
- Bus Revolution project receives a Ministerial Launch in Aberlour.

**Q2 2
3/24**

- LDN architects appointed as lead design partner for the redevelopment of Elgin Town Hall as part of the Cultural Quarter project.
- Drop-in event held regarding regeneration plans for South Street in Elgin, which involves the Business Enterprise Hub and Housing Mix Delivery projects.

**Q3
23/24**

2 Statement from Moray Council's Growth Deal Lead

Throughout 2023 I've seen first hand the significant amount of work being delivered by Council Officers and partner organisations to progress the Growth Deal. In briefing sessions with fellow Members, MGD Board meetings and in conversations with key officers, I'm excited to see plans start to crystallise for the facilities and services we're working hard to put in place.

The Growth Deal is focusing on key improvements we need to see in Moray, including generating high value skills, growing businesses, driving innovation and making Moray a better place to work, live and visit.

The launch in May 2023 of the enhanced, rebranded m.connect Bus Revolution on demand public transport service presented the first opportunity for many to see how the Deal will help residents and businesses. We're humbled by the response seen so far as passenger numbers currently exceed our targets. This project is critical if we are to achieve our objective of reducing transport barriers to work, education and leisure.

Our 'on the ground' activity will grow significantly during 2024 and I look forward to the opening of the Manufacturing Innovation Centre for Moray (MICM) Hub at the Forres Enterprise Park next autumn in what will be our first direct intervention for businesses.

The target is that at least seven of the eight projects will enter delivery during 2024. This presents a solid foundation to start tracking the benefits Growth Deal activity will deliver for Moray. It will also be important that the team considers how activity interacts with other funding programmes we've been successful in securing during 2023 (£18.3m from the Levelling Up Fund and £20m from the Long Term Plan for Towns Fund), with a view to minimising risks and maximising opportunities to enhance benefits wherever possible.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc J.R. Macrae".

Cllr Marc Macrae

3 Progress made from Deal signing on 20 December 2021 to the end of 2022

3.1 Programme overview

The Moray Growth Deal was signed on 20 December 2021 by Iain Stewart MP (UK Government), Cllr Graham Leadbitter (Moray Council) and Kate Forbes MSP (Scottish Government).

3.1.1 Summary of what the Deal is working to achieve

Throughout 2023 the Growth Deal Programme Management Office (PMO) worked with each of the eight Project Managers to ensure activity aligns with the four main interventions the programme aims to deliver:

- Retaining and attracting young people / families (16-29 yrs) to live and work in the area
- Addressing occupational segregation and gender inequality in employment, including the significant gender pay gap and under-employment issues for women
- The creation of new high quality jobs in existing sectors and diversify the region's economy into new high value areas
- The creation of opportunities across Moray which help secure the future prosperity of its many communities

A later section of this report will focus on work being progressed to deliver a Benefits Realisation and Monitoring Plan, with the following outcomes expected to be delivered for the region:

Direct and indirect creation of over **3,500 jobs**

Over 300 new affordable homes will be constructed

450 of the 3,500 jobs will result directly from Growth Deal projects

450 businesses will be supported to scale, increasing Moray's economic productivity by £82m

50,000 more tourists will be attracted to Moray

Creation of new and improved educational, cultural and business innovation facilities

A very distilled view of the Deal is that the eight main projects are working to make interventions against three main areas of focus:

Generate high value skills	Create high value employment	Make Moray a better place to live and work
MAATIC		Bus Revolution
MICM		Cultural Quarter
Business Enterprise Hub		Housing Mix Delivery
EY STEM		Digital Health

3.1.2 Status of Deal activity

With the Scottish and UK Governments each providing funding of £32.5m over a 10 year period, Deal activity will be delivered in a phased approach up to December 2031. That said, the PMO is working with project teams to create clarity on what each project will deliver for Moray during 2024 , with a view to:

- Defining what the Deal is going to deliver when, where and how.
- Maximise time over the 10 year funding period to make sure work runs as efficiently as possible to limit expenditure peaks over and above Government funding, which the Council committed to when the full deal was agreed in December 2021.

A high level summary of the status of each project is outlined below:

High level phases of the lifecycle of projects:



Project	Lifecycle stage				
	SOC	OBC	FBC	Delivery	Closure
Bus Revolution	Complete	Complete	Complete	In delivery	
Business Enterprise (BE) Hub	Complete	Complete	Awaiting approval		
Cultural Quarter	Complete	Complete	Approval expected Q2 24/25		
Digital Health	Complete	Complete	Complete	In delivery	
Early Years (EY) STEM	Complete	Complete	Approval expected Q2 24/25		
Housing Mix Delivery	Complete	Complete	Approval granted Q4 23/24	In delivery	
MAATIC	Complete	Complete	In development		
MICM	Complete	Complete	Approval granted Q4 23/24	In delivery	



3.1.3 Anticipated geographical spread of benefits

As each project works to either draft their full business case or advances delivery activity, a clearer picture is emerging on the geographical spread of Deal activity throughout Moray. The completion of project monitoring plans and a Benefits Realisation Plan during 2024 will provide finer detail but activity has been grouped into one of two main categories:

<p>Infrastructure (physical or virtual) with a Moray-wide footprint</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Virtual healthcare applications are being developed through the Digital Health project that aim to enable conditions to be managed at home, reducing time spent in clinical settings.● On demand m.connect services will be expanded throughout Moray on a phased basis, breaking down barriers to accessing employment education or leisure.● Through a combination of physical hubs, a mobile solution and outreach activity, STEM learning targeting early years children will be available Moray wide.● Comprising of two phases that will run up to 2031, Housing Mix Delivery will enable the construction of affordable and private homes throughout Moray, making it easier to access homes to help people stay in the region.
<p>Moray-wide service offerings to be established, operated from a centralised facility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Support to drive growth and innovation in the manufacturing sector through the MICM project that will create a hub at the Forres Enterprise Park.● The construction of a Business Enterprise Hub on South Street in Elgin will help micro and small businesses to grow as well as offering a variety of education and professional learning opportunities.● An aerospace and advanced technology campus will be developed to support learning as well as R&D opportunities not just for residents of Moray, but wider afield.

3.1.4 Synergies between the Growth Deal and other economic development activity being progressed within Moray

The Growth Deal Team is conscious that to create the right environment for success, alongside managing interactions between projects, activity being progressed by other economic development programmes needs to be considered. This is not only to ensure they have no negative impact on Growth Deal objectives and benefits to be realised, but that any positive opportunities to drive efficiency or to create stronger benefits are maximised wherever possible.

At a strategic level, the Moray Growth Deal Programme Board includes representatives from the Scottish and UK Governments, along with the Council's Economic Development Team and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Collaboration will be essential in understanding the funding landscape and to manage any potential interactions other activity has with Growth Deal activity.

Operationally, the Growth Deal PMO is working to generate clarity on how funding secured for Moray during 2023 (£18.3m from the Levelling Up Fund and £20m from the Long Term Plan for Towns Fund) interacts with planned activity, including the impact on council staff resources, the organisations / companies needed to support the work and the nature of communications planned with key stakeholders including businesses and residents.



*m.connect official launch
with Neil Gray MSP*

PROJECT UPDATES

3.2.1 Bus Revolution



Value £4.32m
(£4m capital, £322k revenue)

Lead Body
The Moray Council

Current status

Entered delivery in March 2023, with the first rebranded m.connect on demand services starting in May 2023.

Project vision

Increase the number of people using public transport to get to and from rural areas for work, education and leisure.



Project summary

Bus Revolution is an innovative project that aims to increase the number of people using public transport to get to and from rural areas to places of work, education and leisure, providing a step change in availability of public transport right across rural Moray.

The project will provide a flexible demand responsive service, operating when and where needed in an easy-to-use way, utilising app-based technology that will allow journeys to be booked up to one hour before they're needed.

Bus Revolution will receive £4.3m in funding from the Scottish Government. This will be used to cover the capital investment required to:

- Set-up operational systems
- Provide branding and marketing
- Purchase electric vehicles
- Provide associated charging infrastructure to deliver an efficient and robust transport network.

Headline achievements

Since the approval of the Full Business Case in March 2023, the main focus of activity during 2023 has been delivering phase one of the project plan starting in Q1 23/24. Activity completed to date has included the:

- Implementation of a real time booking and management system (Op Porta, Driver app)
- Introducing new operating zone & fares models
- Upgrading electronic ticketing machines (ETM)
- Re-branding vehicles
- Creating a service website
- Production of key policy documents supporting the service
- Development and execution of a marketing and communications campaign

Your guide to travelling with m.connect

Get new and improved m.connect service operating across a number of areas throughout Moray.

Plan your journey with our handy zone and fare guide.

m.connect fare structure		
Zone	Single	Return
1	£3.00	£5.00
2	£5.50	£9.00
3	£7.50	£9.00
4 or more	£9.00	£9.00

- 1 Find your start and end point
- 2 Count the fewest number of zones connecting them
- 3 Look up the fare in the fare table

Fares
To pay you can use cash, card, vouchers and Gift coded travel schemes as well as Scotland wide NCC cards, either on-board or via the passenger app payment function.

Purchase of a £9.00 ticket will automatically qualify the ticket holder to all day travel on the service, subject to a confirmed booking on the service and the presentation of a valid ticket at point of boarding.

Out of Service Information
The Service will not operate on the following days:
25 December
26 December
01 January
02 January
May Day holiday

Looking for reliable, convenient and affordable travel in and around Moray?

m.connect

Moray's brand new on demand bus service

Book your journey up to 1 hour before your start of travel

Download the app or call 0300 124585 to book and plan your journey

Simply enter your destination, your preferred time of travel and leave the rest to us.

For more or service information visit moray.gov.uk/mconnect



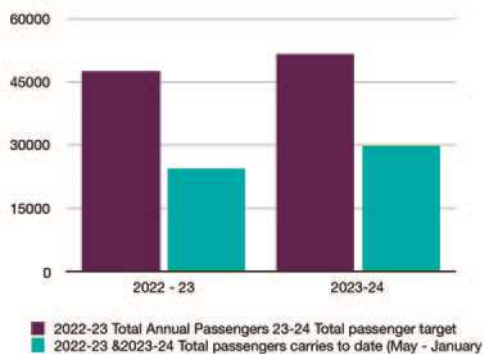


The first phase of m.connect service enhancements introduced the following additional service provision:

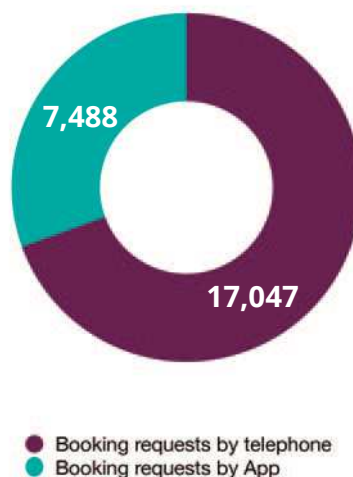
- Timetabled service (309) linking Cullen-Buckie-Keith to the rail network (0515-2030hrs Mon-Fri)
- Enhanced timetable for service 366, linking Aberlour-Archiestown-Elgin (0900-030hrs Mon-Fri)
- m.connect on-demand extended operating hours in Buckie, Keith and Speyside (0630-2030hrs Mon-Fri)

To date, m.connect has shown strong growth, gaining more than 5,000 additional passengers from the same period in 2022. There has also been a shift in how the service is booked, with almost one third of bookings now being made via the m.connect passenger app. To date over 2,000 downloads of the app have been registered through both Google Play and the Apple App Store.

m.connect passenger figures



m.connect booking method



On 28 August 2023, The Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy, Neil Gray MSP, officially launched the m.connect service at Speyside High School. A month later, m.connect was nominated for Scottish Council for Development & Industry (SCDI, now rebranded to 'Prosper') Highlands & Islands Business Excellence Award for Innovation, where the service was awarded second place.



Key milestones

Q1 24/25	Vehicle & Charge Unit Procurement
Q1 24/25	m.connect pilot of weekend services

Risks and issues that require management by the project team during 2024

Risk	Effects	Mitigation
Actual performance varies negatively from assumptions built into the full business case (passenger numbers, fare income etc.)	If performance is not as hoped, the Council's revenue commitment may need to increase to support the service and capital return on investment calculation may become less favourable.	Early performance has been strong and the project is being proactive in monitoring performance data. Project in-life reviews will take a detailed look at data, providing an opportunity to review the service model or future vision to ensure it remains aligned with capital and revenue budget allocations.
Recruitment of staff (drivers and vehicle technicians) could prevent or limit service expansion plans.	Potential for capacity issues to run services, if drivers are not recruited in sufficient numbers, and maintain vehicles or the cost increases as the work needs to be carried out externally.	Continuous advertising of positions, analysing data from different stages of the process to better understand and mitigate challenges faced. The Team will also work to minimise staff turnover.

Focus on...efficiency through analysis

One of the major benefits of the new booking and management system supporting m.connect, is access to a range of reporting tools that inform service optimisation recommendations. The recommendations aim to improve service efficiency by monitoring:

1. Who travels and when (known as ridership).
2. The current demand profile by hour of the day (The balance of supply and demand), Inc passenger per vehicle hour metrics (PpVH).
3. Ride sharing and vehicle utilisation.
4. Trip requests by location, success rates and area specific influencers affecting booking success, such as service zone restrictions, vehicle allocation within area and service / driver break periods.

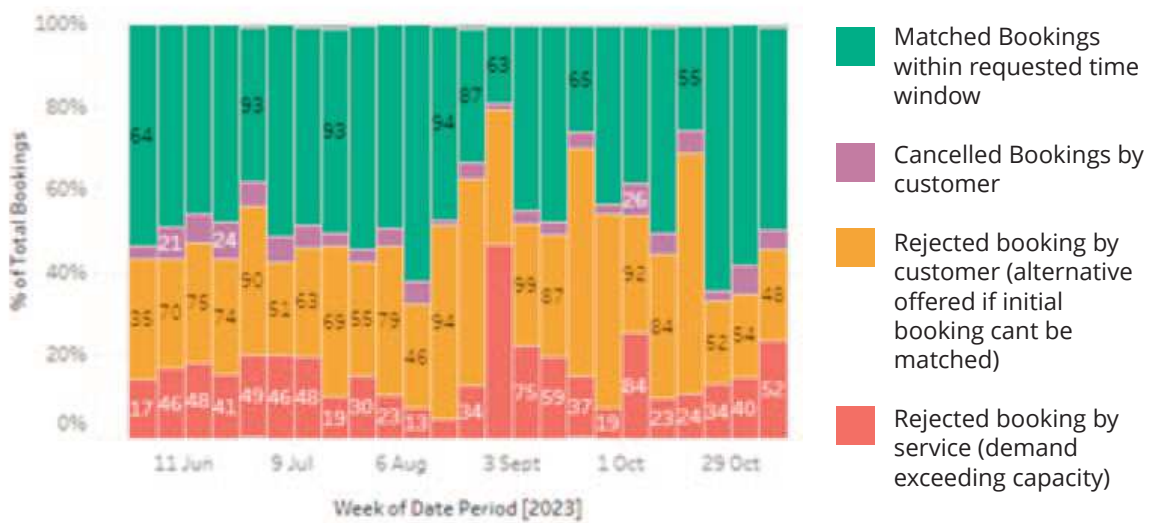
Optimisation sessions are then conducted with the operations team to discuss improvements in service delivery, but also highlight potential deteriorations in other service metrics. These sessions occur every 3 months, allowing suitable monitoring of changes to evidence their impact on the operation. To date, these sessions have improved ride sharing on the service from 42% to 65%, generating an additional 23% seating capacity to accommodate more journeys.



By way of insight, data from Forres exhibits high demand and has shown considerable unmet demand. In order to meet this demand, recommendations included:

1. Modification of vehicle availability, i.e. extending Vehicle 2's operating hours to match/be similar to Vehicle 1. Unaccepted rides are mainly falling in the period with only 1 vehicle operating.
2. Adding an additional vehicle would be beneficial in Forres, improving access to the service.

Bookings by Status Percentage



Using the evidence that is being gathered, the team are looking to enhance the service offering further, with key areas of focus including:

1. Private service functions: The ability to add a bespoke route within the operation to accommodate specific needs including education, health & social care, sports groups, after school clubs.
2. Group booking function: Enabling social groups to request services that involve one request for a trip to a common destination but with multiple collections and drop offs.
3. Integrated ticketing: Fares validated on both on-demand and timetable services.

3.2.2 Business Enterprise (BE) Hub



Value £6.3m

(£4.3m capital,
£2m revenue)

Current status

The full business case has been developed and final clearances to enter delivery will be sought once the recently identified revenue shortfall has been addressed

Lead Body

University of
Highlands and
Islands, Moray
College

Project vision

Provision of education, research, and business support functions to support new business start-ups, whilst helping to upscale existing micro businesses.

Project summary

A key characteristic of Moray is that it has over 3,000 small and medium sized enterprises. This represents a considerable growth potential if these businesses can be helped to scale-up. Supporting the upskilling and growth of these businesses, the Business Enterprise Hub (BE Hub) will be a flexible space for business innovation that is accessible to businesses and students alike, providing an inspirational environment that encourages entrepreneurial thinking. Funding for the facility will be provided by the Scottish Government (£3.3m) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (£1m), with the Scottish Government also provided £2m in revenue to support service delivery.

It will be a productive environment where learning spaces and real work environments coincide, where flexibility of usage allows students, lecturers, researchers, and practitioners to share the same space, and where business support functions can be located with teaching and research skills to develop and support Moray's future entrepreneurs and their workforce.

There are synergies between the BE Hub and other Growth Deal projects including Moray Aerospace, Advanced Technology, and Innovation Campus (MAATIC) and the Manufacturing Innovation Centre for Moray (MICM). Collaboration is ongoing to understand the target audience for each facility and any potential for overlap to ensure they're effectively managed.



Headline achievements

- RIBA stage 2 continued through Spring 2023, technical design elements of RIBA stage 3 were included such as electricity and Wi-Fi cabling, plumbing etc. RIBA stage 3 officially launched in November and is ongoing into January/ February 2024.
- MAATIC, MICM and the BE Hub have developed a clear synergies document that will be shared in the appendices of each FBC.
- The Full Business Case (FBC) was developed throughout the year and has been approved by the MGD Programme Board and the Moray Council. Final clearances from the Governments and the UHI Board will be progressed once the recently identified revenue shortfall has been resolved.
- Briefing and consultation sessions have been held with Moray Councillors, UHI Moray staff, Moray Business Assembly, all positively received with clear demand.
- The BE hub forms part of the South Street regeneration project, designs have been exhibited at a public engagement session on 16 December 23 which attracted over 600 visitors.
- Memorandum of Understanding signed with Moray Council in December.

Key milestones

To progress the aims of the project, the following key milestones are identified for 2024. These include milestones for the construction of the facility as well as the Hub's service offering.

Q1 24/25	Full Business Case approved
Q4 23/24	Initial site survey/ exploration
Q4 23/24	RIBA Stage 3+ Design Complete
Q4 23/24	RIBA Stage 3 Design Cost Plan
Q4 23/24	Planning Application
Q4 23/24	RIBA Stage 3 + Tendered Cost
Q4 23/24	BE hub brand development to start
Q4 23/24	RIBA Stage 4 Design Commences
Throughout 2024, but concluding in Q3 24/25	Accredited course proposals/research and innovation programme further developed

Q1 24/25	Planning Approval
Q1 24/25	RIBA Stage 4 Design Complete
Q2 24/25	RIBA Stage 4 Costs
Q3 24/25	Construction commences

In the expectation that FBC and planning permission approval stages proceed as planned, construction will start in October 2024 and last for approximately 18 months. The Hub “working” model is under development to enable a smooth transition upon building opening/launch with plans in 2024 to develop the BE hub brand. In the background regular project board and stakeholder meetings are ongoing to support the development of the Hub function.

Risks and issues that require management by the project team during 2024

Risk/Issue	Effects	Mitigation
Escalation of build costs	Work to rescope the facility has already taken place to ensure it is delivered within the budget allocation.	Cost mitigation through design specification and realisation of efficiencies due to co-location with a Housing Mix Delivery site.
Revenue shortfall identified	Further work required before the FBC can continue it’s assurance journey.	The revenue funding model is being reviewed with a view to lowering the amount required without impacting the service or quality. Alternative revenue solutions are also being explored.
Potential site issues e.g., ground works and protection / integration of existing heritage (as yet unknown)	Could result in delays to construction activity or the need to revise the vision for the site, both of which could affect time, quality, and cost project parameters.	Detailed site survey work to be progressed as soon as possible. Contingency integrated into the budget to offset any potential issues identified.

Area of focus....emerging RIBA stage 2 design vision for the facility

RIBA Stage 2 was the focus for the first part of the year, feeding into the development of the FBC. Monthly meetings working through design versions were held between UHI Moray, Oberlanders (architects), Robertsons, and Moray Council (design images included below).

The size of building from the original plan has been reduced by one-third to fit the present value of the fixed capital funding allocated, design was critical to ensure the maximisation of space available. Reducing the size does not disadvantage the project, with the change accommodated by adjusting the need from full co-location of public agencies to the hybrid working model now represented in the project. Through developing the designs for RIBA stage 2 costs estimates were prepared to demonstrate the financial sustainability of the BE hub project.

The location of the BE hub will be on South Street in Elgin and will form part of the South Street regeneration project. Over three floors, the hub will be where the Junners Toy Shop previously was. Having a conservationist architect within the team has ensured the building will incorporate some of the original features, such as the scalloped top, as shown in the image below of the front exterior. The glass frontage is important to ensure the building becomes a hub in it's true sense, welcoming and apparent from the exterior.

The hub will have a high profile in the town centre as it's sited near the main UHI Moray campus and the city centre with an aim to make engagement accessible. The hub will provide an inspirational environment, externally and internally and one that really encourages entrepreneurial thinking.

The BE hub will form part of a multi-building site shared with the MGD Housing Mix project. The image above reflects the proposed back exterior to the BE hub including the public realm space, shared with the Housing Mix project, and developed by Moray Council. The back exterior of the hub, also depicting a glass frontage, with the aim again to make engagement activity clearly visible and encouraging.



3.2.3 Cultural Quarter



Value £32.3m

(£31.6m capital,
£700k revenue)

Lead Body

The Moray Council

Current status

Working to submit project Full Business Case to the MGD Board in late Q4 23/24 with a view to entering delivery by Q2 24/25

Project vision

Investment in key local assets, including the refurbishment of Grant Lodge, the Town Hall, and investment in the region's tourism infrastructure designed to leverage in private sector investment in a new hotel.



Project summary

The Cultural Quarter project is working to advance the development of inspirational, accessible, public facing cultural attractions in the centre of Elgin. Significant investment is in place from four partners:

- Scottish Government £12.7m
- UK Government £3.5m
- Moray Council £3.9m
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise £2m

Funding will be used to redevelop two important B listed historic buildings in Elgin: Elgin Town Hall (Phase One) and Grant Lodge (Phase Two). Combined, these phases of activity will provide an enhanced cultural offering which increases city centre activities day and night, and highlights the region as an inspirational destination of choice.

Each element will be linked together by improved public spaces and physical connections, creating a vibrant space in the heart of Elgin which supports inclusive economic growth and cultural expansion within the city and wider region. Collectively they'll help to attract and retain talent whilst increasing tourism region wide. Working with key stakeholders throughout Moray, these vibrant new spaces will act as a springboard for cultural place-based regeneration, providing opportunities for local people and visitors alike whilst supporting the creative, heritage and tourism sectors in Moray to collaborate, thrive and grow.

The creation of modern fit for purpose venues and a visible, aspirational cultural centre in Elgin will encourage private sector investment in a new hotel at a complementary site (Phase Three), meeting a longstanding requirement for additional, quality, hotel accommodation in Moray.



Headline achievements

- Cultural Quarter development workshops and Moray culture & heritage mapping study complete (working with 60+ regional and sectoral partners).
- Specialist economic and cultural consultants EKOS and Creative Services Scotland appointed to update Business Plans for Elgin Town Hall and Grant Lodge, review options for a CQ governance model / operating organisation and update the project impact assessment.
- Cultural Quarter phasing and delivery plan RIBA stage 2 report complete. This presented proposals for how external sites and spaces can be improved and connected to lay the foundations for a successful Cultural Quarter with clear links to the High Street.
- Full fabric condition survey completed for Grant Lodge, including recommendations for conservation standard safeguarding/enabling works and costs.
- LDN Architects appointed as lead consultant in multi-disciplinary design team to progress the plans for a transformed Elgin Town Hall.

Key milestones

Q4 23/24	Updated business plans, operational models, and Impact assessment for CQ venues
Q4 23/24	Capital and transitional programme for Elgin Town Hall confirmed
Q4 23/24	Full Business Case submitted to MGD Programme Board
Q4 23/24	Grant Lodge design team and cost consultants appointed.
Q4 23/24	Elgin Town Hall RIBA stage 2 complete
Q3 24/25	Elgin Town Hall works tendered, with updated annex prepared for governance that adds to detail contained within the FBC
Q2 25/26	Elgin Town Hall Works start on site
Q3 25/26	Grant Lodge works tendered, with updated annex prepared for governance that adds to detail contained within the FBC
Q4 26/27	Elgin Town Hall works complete
TBC - 2027	Grant Lodge works complete

Risks and issues that require management by the project team during 2024

Risk	Effects	Mitigation
<p>Inflation in construction costs means buildings exceed budget allocation.</p>	<p>Impact on deliverability of the project which could in turn affect outcomes and benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Careful planning to ensure designs deliver objectives ● Pursue all additional funding routes ● Appoint client-side cost consultant and construction support through HUB North ● Engage with contractors early, regular review
<p>The project does not have sufficient resources to manage both the complex capital redevelopment programme and associated business and relationship development required.</p>	<p>Lack of resources leads to project delays with operational/business impacts, inability to appoint the correct professional services leads to capital programme delays and cost increases which may affect ability to deliver full vision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning to ensure experienced input for each project strand understood ● Early and continual engagement with key relevant sectors ● Attractive and well-developed briefs which highlight profile and benefits of the CQ ● Engagement with Hub North ● Continual re-assessment of programme risk and interdependencies across internal and external teams ● Share info and learn from other MGD projects.
<p>The project is working to ensure Elgin Town Hall for the Community has options that enable it to operate whilst redevelopment work takes place, but any delays could impact their community and contractual relationships.</p>	<p>Any impact to the sustainability of the charity could negatively affect the project's ability to deliver full project outcome and benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sub-group of the Cultural Quarter Project Board established to oversee transitional arrangements ● Capital programme to be appraised against Elgin Town Hall programme to limit the loss of significant income generation opportunities ● Transition management costs integrated into Cultural Quarter project budgets

Focus on....LDN Architects appointed to lead transformation of Elgin Town Hall

During 2023 the project team worked closely with Elgin Town Hall for the Community and a wide range of other key stakeholders, from Elgin Community Council to the National Theatre of Scotland, to develop a detailed brief which outlined current building issues and future aspirations clearly.

Following a two-stage public procurement process, which generated 23 notes of interest, LDN impressed the panel with their clear, thoughtful approach, and creative concept designs to come out top from a selection of prestigious practices from across the UK. LDN Architects and a number of consultants within their design team have bases in the north of Scotland including employing new local members of staff specifically to work on this project, assisting the Cultural Quarter in delivering our commitment to Community Wealth Building.

Work is now underway to progress RIBA Stage 2 concept designs in line with the first phased submission of the Cultural Quarter Full Business Case which is due late Q4 23/24 / early Q1 24/25. The proposed redevelopment will overcome limitations of the current building to create a welcoming 21st century performance and community space which builds on the success of the existing venue. Redesign of the building will improve circulation, acoustic separation, environmental performance and add a new multi-use studio space to enhance and widen programming. Updating the already popular Elgin Town Hall will enable the venue and Elgin to take its rightful place as the third major cultural centre in a row of important northern capitals.



3.2.4 Digital Health



Value
£5m capital

Lead Body
Rural Centre of
Excellence (RCE) for
Digital Health and
Care Innovation

Current status

Achieved approval for the project Full Business Case in Q3 21/22 and is now in delivery

Project vision

Creation of an anchored demonstration and simulation environment (DSE) and Living Lab testbeds for the Moray region.

Project summary

The Rural Centre for Excellence (RCE) is a complex programme of Research & Development based assets (DSE and R&D infrastructure) in Moray. It links to developing a portfolio of five Living Labs as a vehicle for exploring novel concepts, iterating solutions and evaluating innovations to complex health and care challenges. Since the programme started in late 2021, a number of important key achievements have been realised - particularly over the last 18 months where the RCE innovation team have been mobilised.

At the end of 2023 the project submitted a change request that was approved by the MGD Board seeking to extend the project by a year to May 2026. This is in light of the Rural Centre for Excellence securing a longer term funding agreement from the Scottish Government. The additional time will be used to create a more holistic, connected set of healthcare applications.

The £5m of capital needed for this project is being provided by the UK Government.

One key lesson learned by RCE is that the Moray region and partners were not fully primed to support innovation and digital from the outset. Intensive work is now ongoing with Health and Social Care Moray (H&SCM) and the wider community to support them in developing capacity and aligning with their strategic priorities. There is a notable commitment from H&SCM, who has recently included the Living Lab themes in their long-term strategic planning. In common with social care capacity across the UK, pressures in this sector does constrain ability to engage and deliver at pace. The digital health initiative funded by the Moray Growth Deal is an opportune investment to support R&D and sector-wide innovation (which is likely to increase productivity).

Strategic Landscape

The health and care sector continues to face challenges as increasing demand for services exceeds the ability of services to accommodate this. That said, the innovation landscape in the UK is experiencing significant momentum with various initiatives underway to harness technology, data and collaborative efforts to enhance healthcare delivery. The main trends to note are:

1. Increasing technology integration to bring digital health solutions into healthcare systems and provide more personalised care.
2. Data utilisation efforts to leverage vast amounts of data to explore ways to identify trends, predict changes, personalise care and optimise resource allocation via data-driven approaches.
3. Focus on prevention and well-being: There is a growing shift toward preventative care and holistic well-being. Initiatives aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles, mental health support, and early intervention to prevent chronic conditions are gaining traction.

The landscape in the health and care sector is ever evolving. Advancements in technology, changes in policy, and societal needs continue to shape the direction of innovation in the UK, against an uncertain funding backdrop.

Headline achievements

Living Labs

- During 2024, Living Lab 1 (Supported Self-Management) will progress through its development phase and into testing.
- Living Lab 3 (Care in Place) has progressed significantly over the last year, with two key assets (both fundamental to the full RCE infrastructure) developed, and the user testing phase nearing completion. The first asset to emerge for this living lab is the Community Connections @Moray platform and is the spotlight focus in this year's report. The second asset is the creation of a Personal Data Store (PDS). The scope of the work is around integrated care, and looking at equipping citizens with a Personal Data Store that allows them to keep a copy of their data online and take it with them as they move between different health, care, third sector and independent organisations. It will also potentially contain information from health professionals, making it easier for them to understand the healthcare journey of patients.
- Living Lab 2 (Long Term Condition Co-Management) NHS pathway was activated in 2023, as definition and initiation workshops highlighted a need to find digital solutions to support access deprivation and the sustainability of a clinical service to support those with a type 2 diabetes diagnosis.
- Living Lab 2 (Long Term Condition Co-Management) community pathway was also activated and workshops took place with the Occupational Therapy (OT) service to develop a call to industry to develop digital solutions to improve access to the service and reduce waiting times.
- Significant re-scoping for Living Lab 4 (Smart Housing/Smart Communities) and Living Lab 5 (Mental Wellbeing) with realignment of the site from Dallas Dhu to Leancoil Trust in partnership with the Housing Mix project.

- Developing key enabling R&D digital infrastructure to allow the work to take place.
- Progressing information governance and EQIA assessments.

Skills

- A skills grant was awarded to UHI Moray to develop an online learning module "Digital Essentials for Carers" comprising four short units – learners receive a digital 'badge' on completion of each unit and a digital certificate to confirm completion of the overall module, which can support the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of paid staff.
- SkillsFest event took place at UHI Moray in November 2023 - the key focus of this R&D skills-related gathering was to share the RCE skills work and outline how innovation assets and strengthening the skills and education pathway can enable the region to become more attractive, increasing the skills across the system.
- Curating skills and activities that support capability and capacity building for the ecosystem that will need to understand how to innovate and use digital tools (e.g., Micro credentials and upskilling out-reach activities).

Procurement

- Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) was activated as the innovative procurement vehicle for RCE calls to industry.

Comms and Engagement

- The Demonstration and Simulation Environment (DSE) was set up and launched early in 2023. A launch event was held in April to mark the occasion, with a closed session in the morning with invited delegates and an open session in the afternoon for the general public to experience the DSE.
- Procurement of a collaboration platform to support the Digital Innovation Hub and Citizen Panel activities for the RCE project.
- Developing a network of stakeholders and a strong project board including sub working groups aligned to thematic areas (e.g. skills, sustainability).
- Developing international opportunities and hosting international visitors at the DSE in Moray.
- Reaching over 300 participants locally, over 60 registered for the RCE citizen panel.

Evaluation

- Strategic Evaluation Partner contract was successfully appointed to University of Highlands and Islands with the draft evaluation framework being developed.

Sustainability and inward investment

- RCE Sustainability working group was set up and an outline sustainability plan has been developed by the Commercial Innovation Lead.
- Supported bid-development in the region including a successful community research network funded through UKRI and further digital inclusion funding from SCVO.

Strategic

- Internal audit completed in December 2023 with positive feedback received.

Key milestones

Q1 24/25	Living Lab 1 and 3 to move to real world evidence stage
Q1 24/25	Development activity for living lab 2 to commence for community supported diabetes pathway
Q1 24/25	Invitation to tender launched via the DPS for Occupational Therapy Service support (living lab 2)
Q1 24/25	Living labs 4 and 5 to commence

Risks and issues that require management by the project team during 2024

Risk	Effects	Mitigation
Ability for key local and regional stakeholders to support project innovation activity.	Has the potential to cause slower uptake in support for the project which may cause delays in reaching milestones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change request approved during Q4 23/24 that extends project into 2026. Provides more time for the project to develop effective relationships with all partners to secure the necessary support to complete deliverables.

Focus on....Community Connections app development under living lab 3 (Care in Place)

Throughout the RCE project and broader DHI engagement, it has been repeatedly highlighted by citizens and professionals that there is a need for better access to information and services with a reduced need for the user to re-tell their story. The Care in Place project team with broad stakeholder representation, have iteratively codesigned the 'Community Connections @Moray' (CCM) platform to offer this in a one stop shop.

With an initial focus on unpaid carer need, the CCM platform provides information for both the cared for, and the unpaid carer, through a holistic, verified and filterable directory of community, third sector, health and care services and resources. The primary aim is to support self-management and enable access to the right information at the right time, with sign posting and soft referral where appropriate. By registering with a name and email address, users will also have access to an 'about me' section where they can record their own journey and personally significant information for automated re-use in referral to a selection of community services.

This platform has been developed throughout 2023 and will be tested in the Forres and Lossiemouth areas in 2024, along with the Personal Data Store. As a core infrastructure asset for the RCE, this platform will continue to grow and develop along with other living lab activity.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'community connections moray' website. The header includes the logo on the left and navigation links for 'Find Services', 'Support given', 'About', and 'My Story' on the right. The main content area features the headline 'Supporting you and connecting you to what matters.' Below this are two buttons: 'Create your Story' and 'Watch the Film'. A central image shows two people in a shop, with a shopping bag icon overlaid. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'How can we help?' with a short paragraph: 'Early Access connects older people and those caring for them with services that matter to them and a smoother, easier route to accessing those services.'

3.2.5 Early Years Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)



Value £6.4m
(£4.8m capital,
£1.575m revenue)

Current status

Working to submit project Full Business Case to the MGD Board Q4 23/24 FY, with a view to securing clearance to enter delivery by June 2024.

Lead Body
The Moray Council

Project vision

To raise the aspirations of children age 3-8 in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)



Project summary

The Early Years STEM project will see investment of £4.8 million of capital funding from both the Scottish Government and Moray Council. The Scottish Government will commit up to £3.5m and Moray Council £1.3m. Moray Council will meet revenue requirements (£1.575m) that includes operational costs and dedicated staffing provision for the duration of the project.

The nature of work is changing, and where Moray has historically relied upon traditional manufacturing and retail business, in the future there will be more high level, technology based occupations. Creating more appeal for STEM related jobs is important to facilitate the evolution of skills required by the future jobs market, and to ensure Moray is resilient in the future.

Early Years STEM aims to encourage young people to enter into a STEM related career when they leave education and focuses on STEM engagement with children in their early stages of learning (age 3-8). The project develops a STEM learning ecosystem in the Moray area, through the creation of specialist learning environments and experiences, access to training and resources, and the creation of a STEM learning network involving key delivery partners, upskilled staff, volunteers from industry and the wider community.

This innovative development will build on existing educational practices and initiatives, and will create the necessary infrastructure to support a STEM skills pathway from early years through to broad general education and beyond.

The project will invest in state of the art facilities in community settings throughout Moray, each offering a unique experience that can be delivered flexibly across the region, including mobile and outreach offerings. These Hubs will aim to inspire and enhance the STEM learning experience of children and staff through age appropriate, curriculum aligned and industry related STEM experiences, and will offer accessibility to parents, employers and the wider community, thereby allowing inter-generational learning to take place.

The aspiration of this strategy is to close the equity gaps in participation and attainment in STEM, ultimately leading to more young people choosing STEM occupations at a later stage in their lives. ensure they're effectively managed.

Headline achievements

Significant progress has been made during 2023 with the development of infrastructure, operational plans and partnership arrangements.

Sites have been identified for all four STEM centres, with particular focus on planning for the first of these located within Elgin Library. A multi-disciplinary design team led by Moray Council has been appointed and early architectural proposals developed for the Elgin facility. Planning will continue into 2024 as proposals are developed for the satellites sites in Forres and Buckie, as well as a unique outdoor environmental education centre in a central location.

These facilities will be complemented by a robust outreach provision that includes a mobile offer and STEM Lending Resource, delivered in collaboration with UHI Moray's STEM Outreach team and with support from key STEM providers across Moray. UHI Moray's Lend a Lab initiative is now being offered to Moray schools and 2024 will see partners adopt an iterative and collaborative approach to further develop this model and extend the reach of STEM engagements from early years through to primary education.

Proposals are being finalised for inclusion into the Early Years STEM Full Business Case which is on track for submission to the Moray Growth Deal Programme Board early in 2024. Approval of the Full Business Case will secure funding to commence a capital development programme and official launch of the first STEM centre location in August 2025.



Key milestones

As we head towards completion of the Full Business Case, 2024 will see significant progress on a number of elements:

Phase 1	
Q1 24/25	Full Business Case submission
Q1 24/25	Staff recruitment and curriculum development
Q2 24/25	Official launch of STEM outreach offer
Q2 24/25	Design phase RIBA 3-4 incorporating exhibition and interpretation
Q3 24/25	Construction contractor appointed
Q4 24/25	Vehicle and equipment purchase
Q1 25/26	Construction and fit out works complete
Q2 25/26	Official launch of Elgin STEM Centre and mobile offer
Phase 2	
Q1 24/25	Development of proposals and partner agreements
Q4 24/25	Creation of development plans, budgets and architectural drawings.
Q4 24/25	Public consultation
Q2 25/26	Site acquisition, legal processes and planning permissions
Up to Q1 28/29	Delivery phase of building works, infrastructure development
Q2 26/27	Official launch of Outdoor Environmental Education Centre
Q2 27/28	Official Launch of Forres STEM Centre
Q2 28/29	Official Launch of Buckie STEM Centre

Risks and issues that require management by the project team during 2024

Risk	Effects	Mitigation
Rising construction costs and scope change.	Potential to affect the scale and ambition of the project that could affect outcomes and benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Re-develop existing space to reduce costs. ● Experienced architectural team to provide budgets and sound project management. ● A phased approach to implementation of facilities that will identify rising costs, capture lessons learned and make early interventions. ● Close liaison between teams. ● Adopt value engineering approach.
Insufficient operation planning and budgets.	Inability to realise outreach activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Delivery model revised during 2023 to fit the capital and revenue budget available. ● Build in elements to the project that will attract future funding opportunities to support core staffing and continued refreshment of the project. ● Grow partnerships with other STEM providers. ● Develop a delivery network of volunteers and industry ambassadors to ensure the longevity of the project.
No change in community attitudes or regular repeat visitations to STEM centre infrastructure.	Improvements in STEM attainment levels not realised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consultations with education staff, young people and the community throughout the design process to understand need. ● Engagement with other STEM providers, partnering and providing a web of joined up inspiring and age appropriate experiences ● Identify barriers to participation and seek to remove where possible. ● Flexible and dynamic approach to curriculum development and project delivery. ● Implement CPD training to benefit all schools through the Associated School Group (ASG) network

Focus on....the project's first hub in Elgin Library

The first phase of the MGD Early Years STEM Project will see development of an Early Years STEM Discovery Centre and Community Learning Hub, hosted within Elgin Library at Cooper Park. The space will serve as a focal point for early years STEM education, delivering interactive learning experiences to Early Learning and Childcare settings, primary schools, and home educators across the region.

The partnership with Elgin Library delivers mutual learning objectives while sharing resources, through co-location, provision of specialist equipment and support from staff.

2023 has seen significant progress planning for this facility. Moray Council's Architect led Design Team have developed proposals to RIBA stage 2 which sees the former drill hall area transformed into an early years interactive learning resource. An exhibition and interpretation design partner is being appointed in January 2024 to fit out the space incorporating bespoke learning equipment and educational programmes. Stakeholder consultation is being planned for 2024 where users of the space will contribute to design plans and support the creation of a state-of-the-art facility that will transform STEM learning in Moray.

The BE hub will form part of a multi-building site shared with the MGD Housing Mix project. The image above reflects the proposed back exterior to the BE hub including the public realm space, shared with the Housing Mix project, and developed by Moray Council. The back exterior of the hub, also depicting a glass frontage, with the aim again to make engagement activity clearly visible and encouraging.



3.2.6 Housing Mix Delivery



Value
£7.5m capital

Lead Body
The Moray Council

Current status

The full business case was approved during Q4 23/24 and the project has entered delivery.

Project vision

Stimulating housing development in town centres, unlock constrained sites and promote the integration of pilot exemplar sustainable design and construction techniques.

Project summary

The Housing Mix Delivery is a £7.5m project with a commitment of £5m from the Scottish Government and £2.5m from Moray Council. The project supports the delivery of up to 360 affordable houses and plots; 150 short-term construction jobs annually; stimulates the private housebuilding sector to deliver up to 500 market houses; supports town centre regeneration of brownfield sites; and provision of housing in rural towns and villages.

Headline achievements

- Strategic progress: Full Business Case approved by Moray Growth Deal Programme Board on 29 September 2023.
- South Street, Elgin: Legal agreements signed between partners, site acquisition commenced in November 2023. Design completed to RIBA Stage 2, and RIBA Stage 3 work started in November 2023.
- Dallas Dhu, Forres: Design team was appointed in March 2023. Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) submitted on 16 June 2023 and revised PAN was submitted on 21 November 2023 to include student accommodation.
- Hillside Farm, Dufftown: Design team appointed in June 2023. Community Engagement Events held on 9 August 2023 and 6 December 2023.
- Speyview, Aberlour: Funding package agreed by the Scottish Government More Homes Division to provide additional funding given the Growth Deal investment.

Key milestones

Q4 23/24	South Street, Elgin: Submission for planning consent
Q4 23/24	Dallas Dhu, Forres: Submission for planning consent
Q4 23/24	Hillside Farm, Dufftown: Draft Masterplan to be approved by Council's Planning and Regulatory Services Committee
Q1 24/25	Speyview, Aberlour: Funding Agreement to be signed and Growth Deal investment of £700,000 to be spent
August 2024	Hillside Farm, Dufftown: Final Masterplan to be approved by Council's Planning and Regulatory Services Committee



Risks and issues that require management by the project team during 2024

Risk	Effects	Mitigation
Inflation and construction costs continue to rise.	<p>The project is able to invest in fewer sites throughout Moray as the budget was fixed in 2021 and will not be adjusted for inflation.</p> <p>Whilst this is a risk the project is managing, it is still projected that the expected benefits will be realised.</p>	<p>A cost consultant has been engaged to control the investment costs for each site.</p> <p>Funding from additional sources will be sought.</p>
Inability to attract external sources of funding to support the delivery of the project.	Project scope may need to be changed or the delivery timescales elongated.	The Council is actively exploring external funding options, such as UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Just Transition and UK Government Long Term Plan for Towns.
Activity being progressed by other Growth Deal projects or economic development activity in Moray has a negative impact on HMD.	Potential for other activity to impact the ability for HMD to create the right environment for success with stakeholders and realise all of the benefits sought.	Good working relationships have been established between Growth Deal Project Managers. This is evidenced through constructive collaboration with the Business Enterprise Hub on South Street redevelopment.

Focus on....South Street (Elgin) regeneration project

This is a partnership project between Moray Council, Moray College UHI and Robertson Property Ltd; and forms part of two Moray Growth Deal projects: Housing Mix Delivery and Business Enterprise Hub. The overall site comprises five separate ownerships:

- M&Co, 51 South Street (long vacant)
- Elgin Furniture & Carpet Store, 53-55 South Street (operating business)
- Junners, 57-61 South Street (long vacant)
- Jailhouse, 130 High Street (derelict)
- Newmarket Bar, 130 High Street (derelict)

This regeneration project will deliver the Business Enterprise Hub, 38 one and two bed flats and opportunities for 2-3 small retail units.

During 2023 design was progressed to RIBA stage 2 and in November 2023 entered into RIBA Stage 3. Legal agreements were signed by all parties and development agreements have been drafted late 2023. Site assembly started in late 2023 and public engagement event was held on 16 December 2023. A detailed planning application is anticipated to be submitted to the Council during Q4 23/24.



*South Street development plans
design concept*

3.2.7 Moray Aerospace, Advanced Technology and Innovation Campus (MAATIC)



Value
£24.4m capital

Lead Body
UHI (University of
Highlands and
Islands)

Current status
Project under review in light of funding
challenges.

Project vision
A cutting edge commercial and
academically supported training and
research centre for excellence that will
provide advanced skills for the region's
industries.

Project summary

This project aims to deliver a once-in-a-generation combination of the Moray Growth Deal, strategic aerospace developments and a partnership with Boeing to provide a genuinely transformational opportunity for the region and its people. Funding for the facility will be provided by the UK Government (£21m) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (£3m).

Having received an updated and detailed proposal from Boeing in summer 2023, regarding how they will support the MAATIC facility, the project team is working to develop a Full Business Case that focuses on five streams of activity:

- 1) Boeing /Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) / Air Services Training (AST - Existing skills and training vehicle of UHI Perth) condensed part 66 and type approved training (aerospace and aviation)
- 2) Immersive training centre for safety critical systems (immersive technologies and synthetic training)
- 3) Delivery of a suite of integrated programmes of education covering aerospace, aviation, immersive technologies, advanced manufacturing and innovation
- 4) Centre for research in aerospace and sustainable fuels (aviation, aerospace and innovation)
- 5) Innovation and development space

The MAATIC building itself will house commercial and academic leading-edge research on these emerging technologies, will be a training facility to support the skills required to underpin and deliver these technologies. It will have a communal space for the promotion of STEM developments and opportunities to the community and to the next generation of technologists.

Whilst the Business Enterprise Hub, MICM and MAATIC FBCs aim to solve different challenges regarding business growth and skills, there are significant synergies and work has taken place to ensure clarity on the scope of each, areas for potential overlap and how these can be successfully managed.

Headline achievements

During 2023 the project developed a revised vision for the project that saw a move to focusing on leading edge digital skills for the aerospace industry that is supported by Boeing, the application of digital learning to other safety critical environments and R&D opportunities. With no need for the facility to be located near to a runway, other sites in Moray have been appraised.

A key project USP is a progressive, mutually beneficial relationship with Boeing. Following work to refine the vision for the facility and how Boeing could support this, both parties advanced the development of a formal partnership agreement.

From a resourcing perspective, the pace of progress during 2023 has been affected by staff changes and availability. Steps were taken at the end of 2023 to mitigate this in the future with responsibility for the project moving from UHI-Moray to UHI-Executive Office.

Key milestones

Q4 23/24	UHI to conclude internal review of the project FBC
Q4 23/24	Subject to the above, the following steps will be taken to advance the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● UHI and Boeing to sign a partnership agreement● Resubmission of MAATIC FBC to the MGD Board, with a view to commencing the process to secure Government and Moray Council approval● Government clearance and Council approval to be secured, enabling the project to enter delivery● MAATIC project to enter delivery
Q4 23/24	
Q2 24/25	
Q2 24/25	

Risks and issues that require management by the project team during 2024

Risk	Effects	Mitigation
Issue: The FBC in it's current form cannot be progressed.	Potential for delay and rework.	Close collaboration with key stakeholders.
Risk: Gaps between actual and projected targets around student numbers, research and innovation.	Alters the financial model and potentially the viability of the project as a whole.	Robust planning during the implementation phase and regular reviews of data so the project and Business As Usual teams can take action as needed to realise targets set.
Risk: Delay in site acquisition.	Affects the delivery timescales for the project.	Close collaboration with key stakeholders.
Risk: Increase in capital costs render original plan unaffordable.	Threatens planned redevelopment of site and FBC plans.	Should the revised costs push beyond the budget explore refinements to reduce costs that mean project objectives can still be achieved.

Focus on....creating a digital learning environment for aerospace skills

Throughout 2023 the project worked closely to redefine the vision for the facility in light of the industry moving towards hybrid (virtual and physical) training for aerospace skills. UHI sought to ensure that a multi-dimensional operating and financial model was in place that would mean the continued viability of the campus.

Central to the new vision is the use of augmented, immersive teaching environments for condensed part 66 training. The project will work with Boeing and the Civil Aviation Authority in light of changing regulations to integrate virtual ways of working into teaching.

In creating these teaching environments, the project will look to the academic and R&D opportunities within the facility to include both digital skills and apply the learning environments to other safety critical environments.

3.2.8 Manufacturing and Innovation Centre for Moray (MICM)



Value £7m
(£5.6m capital,
£1.36m revenue)

Lead Body
Highlands and
Islands Enterprise

Current status

The full business case was approved during Q4 23/24 and the project has entered delivery.

Project vision

A focal point for businesses to learn best practice and collaborate, stimulating the creation of new and growth of existing micro businesses throughout Moray.

Project summary

The key driver for this project is to achieve a grassroots cultural shift in how Moray businesses gain insight into the latest process and production efficiencies that are available, and how they can use them for product and process innovation.

The Manufacturing Innovation Centre for Moray (MICM) will act as a local focal point for business to access best practice and identify how they can collaborate with universities and other research institutes. They'll be quickly supported to access the relevant support from organisations such as Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS), Scottish Manufacturing Advisory Service (SMAS), Interface (the knowledge connection for business), Business Gateway and other service providers to meet their needs.

The project will receive both capital (£610k from the Scottish Government, £2.4m from the UK Government and £2.5m from Highland and Islands Enterprise) and revenue funding (£1.25m from Highlands and Islands Enterprise).

MICM will provide services that are customised to the needs of rural manufacturing business, it will also act as a vital access point for local businesses to engage with the National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland and other national innovation support services.

The development of the FBC during 2023 has supported our view that, while much has changed since the Moray Growth Deal was developed, the core need to support a vital sector to improve and innovate has not and MICM's mission is more relevant than it was in 2019.

Headline achievements

Our focus during 2023 has been to develop the Full Business Case and to gain approval for the project to progress.

Key achievements include:

- Development and approval of change request covering the project's location, no longer co-locating with the MAATIC project, but refurbishing existing buildings with some new build construction on the Forres Enterprise Park.
- Whilst the MICM, MAATIC and Business Enterprise Hub projects all tackle different audiences regarding skills and business development, work developed the potential for overlap and synergies with each.
- Development of the project's Full Business Case that was approved by the MGD Board in September 2023.
- Engagement with the Government to enhance the FBC following comments from Policy Advisors.
- Approval of the FBC by HIE Board.

Key milestones

Feb 2024	Complete design
March 2024	Planning approval
May 2024	Commence construction
Autumn 2024	Key staff recruited
Autumn 2024	Complete construction
Autumn 2024	Operational stand-up

Risks and issues that require management by the project team during 2024

Risk	Effects	Mitigation
Cost inflation affects project affordability.	Compromises what MICM can deliver.	Monitor. Contingency is built into cost model. Construction starts in 2024.
Lack of productive engagement with the business community.	Vision for MICM diverges from what the business community would like to see.	Consultation events with the Moray Growth Deal, Business Assembly and Chamber of Commerce, as well as a broader business survey. Ensure involvement with Project Board.
Revenue assumptions are overoptimistic.	Revenue shortfall	Sensitivity analysis in FBC. Develop alternative revenue sources.



Focus on....how the project will support businesses to grow and innovate

The ambition for MICM is to create a grassroots cultural shift in efficiency and innovation for Moray's manufacturing businesses. HIE work with manufacturing businesses across our region to support their development and we see a clear and growing need for local support to access the best practice required to make the leap to the next level.

Some recent examples include:

- A manufacturer developing lighter components using composites is looking for support in development of validation and testing of components from NMIS and the national Lightweight Manufacturing Centre. This will require at least two week's travel to the central belt for key personnel who are currently in the middle of a demanding scale-up project. The company is currently weighing the benefits of continuing with the project. With MICM in place they could access a local venue for both equipment and project support reducing costs and disruption and bringing the test equipment closer to their processes.
- A Caithness based engineering company has been affected by a shortage of skilled labour. Having analysed their manufacturing processes, they believe that automation of their production line might help. With support from HIE, the company attended a demonstration event held in Thurso by the North Lanarkshire SmartHub to explore the use of cobots (collaborative robots) to improve their welding processes. During the event the company met with an equipment vendor and have gone on to develop a project to install and evaluate a small cobot at their Caithness site. The potential prize for the company is an expansion of working hours, reduced order fulfilment times and securing further orders. This is a great example of the type of project that we want MICM to work for Moray businesses – using a centralised hub to provide links and opportunities for SMEs to access best practice in manufacturing and supporting them to evaluate how it could benefit their business.



4 Forward look at activity planned for 2024

4.1 Work to get all Growth Deal projects into delivery

The Moray Growth Deal entered 2023 with one project in delivery, Digital Health. This was quickly joined by Bus Revolution that received clearance to enter delivery in March 2023.

Building on this, in the second half of 2023, three project FBCs were developed and submitted for formal review by the Scottish and UK Governments:

- Business Enterprise Hub
- Housing Mix Delivery
- MICM

These documents have been the subject of extensive consultation and received approval from a number of different governance steps.

Project	Pre-submission workshop with the Governments	Project Board approval	First approval to trigger Government review	Second review following Government feedback	Other approvals	Moray Economic Partnership
BE Hub	21 Jun 2023	27 Jul 2023	11 Aug 23	12 Dec 23	26 Jul 23: Moray College Board	14 Dec 23
Housing Mix Delivery	3 Aug 2023	20 Sep 2023	29 Sep 23	12 Dec 23		14 Dec 23
MICM	3 Aug 2023	8 Sep 2023	25 Aug 23	12 Dec 23	31 Oct 23: HIE Board	14 Dec 23

By the end of Q4 23/24, four of the eight Growth Deal projects are in delivery (Housing Mix Delivery and MICM joining Digital Health and Bus Revolution), with the Business Enterprise Hub due to be the fifth once the philanthropic revenue is confirmed. Of the three remaining projects:

- The Cultural Quarter and EY STEM projects are expected to submit their FBCs to the MGD Board during Q4 23/24 and Q1 24/25.
- An FBC has been drafted for MAATIC that is currently being reviewed.

4.2 PMO Milestones to be achieved

During the course of 2024, the Moray Growth Deal PMO is working to achieve a number of key milestones:

Q4 23/24	Work to understand planning implications (resources, risks, opportunities) associated between the Growth Deal, Levelling Up Fund and the Long Term Plan for Towns fund.
Q4 23/24	Deal annual conversation involving senior officers from Moray Council and the Scottish and UK Governments.
Q4 23/24 or Q1 24/25	Business Enterprise to enter delivery once revenue budget confirmed.
Q1 24/25	2024/25 grant offer letter to be agreed with the Scottish Government, confirming the level of funding to be provided during the financial year.
Q1 24/25	Publication of the Deal's 2023 annual report.
Q2 24/25	Cultural Quarter and EY STEM project full business cases to be approved and clearance secured to enter delivery.
Q2s and 3 24/25	Second tranche of in-life reviews to be scheduled.

4.3 Factors needing action or future activity could be impacted

There are a number of 'uncertainties' that could have a positive or negative impact on Growth Deal activity that are being managed at both a programme and project level. Key uncertainties include:

- Consideration needs to be given to how Growth Deal activity interacts with projects funded through Levelling Up and the Long Term Plan for Towns Fund to ensure that they complement each other, that there is no overlap and that there are no inadvertent risks created as the work is commissioned.
- With the potential for construction projects associated with the Business Enterprise Hub, Cultural Quarter and Housing Mix Delivery occurring at the same time in Elgin, planning will need to take place with key stakeholders to ensure any potential disruption for the public and businesses is minimised.
- Cost inflation and the affordability of projects remains a potential risk. During 2023 significant work was undertaken by Project Managers to rework aspects of construction plans an operational models to ensure they meet capital and revenue projections. Looking into 2024, the greatest budgetary challenges will be faced by Cultural Quarter's two significant building refurbishments; MAATIC design activity for their campus; and the continued affordability of work by Housing Mix Delivery to increase affordable and private house building rates in Moray.
- At a time when Moray Council and other public organisations are facing significant budgetary challenges, it's important to manage when and how communications related to Growth deal activity are released. This ensures messages about changes to the Council or partner budgets are separate from news about Growth Deal investment.

4.4 Monitoring the benefits to be realised by the Deal

Significant progress has been made to ensure a firm baseline is in place on what benefits and their associated targets will be delivered at both a programme and project level, with a completed Benefits Realisation and Monitoring Plan due to finalised in Q1 24/25. This is a quarter behind original projections, primarily due to procurement delays experienced. Key activity that needs to be completed includes:

- A procurement call for consultancy support to gather evidence for programme level indicators took place during Q3 23/24, however, this was unsuccessful which has delayed the plan. During Q4 23/24 into Q1 24/25 the PMO will work to secure consultancy support to complete this work.
- Work has taken place with projects on the monitoring plans needed as full business cases are developed.
- During Q1 24/25, the PMO will submit a paper to the MGD Programme Board that draws together all of the information above into a Benefits Realisation and Monitoring Plan. This will include a stock check to make sure the Deal is on track to deliver the outcomes set out when at Full Deal signing in December 2021.

5. Financial summary

5.1 Funding sources for Deal activity

During 2023 the funding landscape for the Moray Growth Deal remained static, with no changes to the funding agreement in place between the Moray Council and the Scottish and UK Government.

The same capital and revenue profile as reported in the 21/22 annual report remains valid, however, there is the potential for a reduction in the capital cost associated with the MICM project. The profile contained within the financial model of the approved business case, sees capital costs reduce from £6.87m to £5.6m. During 2024 consideration will be given to how this underspend can be reallocated to other Growth Deal activity.

As highlighted in section 4, there is potential that projects such as Cultural Quarter may have difficulties funding the current aspiration and scope within the existing funding, however, work will take place to adjust construction plans and seek other sources of funding.

Grant Lodge survey



Project	Scottish Government investment (£'000)	UK Government investment (£'000)	Local partner investment (£'000)	Total investment (£'000)
Capital				
Bus Revolution	4,000	-		4,000
BE Hub	3,300	-	1,000	4,300
Cultural Quarter	12,700	3,500	15,400	31,600
Digital Health	-	5,000	-	5,000
Early Years STEM	3,500	-	1,300	4,800
Housing Mix Delivery	5,000	-	2,500	7,500
MAATIC*	-	21,000	3,390	24,390
MICM	750 (610 in project FBC)	3,000 (2,442 in project FBC)	3,140 (2,557 in project FBC)	6,890 (5,609 in project FBC)
TOTAL	29,250 (reducing to 29,110 due to MICM FBC)	32,500 (reducing to 31,942 due to MICM FBC)	26,730 (reducing to 26,147 due to MICM FBC)	88,480 (reducing to 87,199 due to MICM FBC)
Revenue				
Bus Revolution	-	-	332	332
BE Hub	2,000	-		2,000
Cultural Quarter			700	700
Early Years STEM	-	-	1,575	1,575
MAATIC*	-	-	-	-
MICM	1,250	-	110	1,360
TOTAL	3,250	-	2,707	5,957

* Level of funding expected to be higher due to private benefit in kind contribution and HIE revenue support

5.2 Funding drawn down from Scottish and UK Governments - Q4 22/23 to Q3 23/24

In line with the conditions associated with Scottish and UK Government funding, projects can only draw down funding once their full business cases have been approved by the MGD Board, both Governments and the Moray Council. During 2023, two projects had reached this stage:

Project	Government investment (£'000)	Draw down (all figures £'000)		
		Previous draw down up to Q2 22/23 inclusive)	Period covered by this annual report (Q4 22/23 to Q3 23/24)	Total draw down to date
Bus Revolution	4,000	0	738	738
Digital Health	5,000	1,505	1,293	2,798
TOTAL	9,000	1,505	2,031	3,536



6. 2023 communications activity

May 2023 saw the publication of the 2021/22 Moray Growth Deal Annual Report, alongside a round up of the status of each project. As more projects progressed through their planning and business case stages, activity increased during 2023. This included media releases, social media posts and stories with live streaming from events alongside in-person engagement activity and events, specifically:

Bus Revolution project, m.connect on demand public transport services

The comms and marketing campaign for m.connect started with a driver recruitment campaign in February 2023 and the commencement of services in May. This progressed to full phase one service delivery marketing and official Ministerial launch by August 2023.

The launch involved the unveiling of the first name of one of the electric buses, which was open to all residents in Moray to suggest as part of the engagement campaign, which attracted over 200 entries. Promotion of the services and new developments to the offering, including group bookings, continued throughout the year.

Business Enterprise (BE) Hub

The details of the Business Enterprise Hub were further highlighted in November 2023 as part of the wider promotion of regeneration activity planned for South Street in Elgin. Building on this, a drop-in exhibition was held in December 2023 to explain the vision to local residents attracting over 600 visitors. Planning applications and full business case approval will enable further communications and engagement opportunities to take place in early 2024.

Cultural Quarter

The Cultural Quarter has picked up momentum this year as details were released on the plans for Grant Lodge and investigative works, with updates given online and in person at local events such as Doors Open Day tours in September 2023. A further significant milestone was marked when LDN were appointed as the design team for Elgin Town Hall in November 2023.

Digital Health

Digital Health Innovation launched its Demonstration and Simulation Environment (DSE) Space in April 2023, which propelled the communications and engagement activity into the delivery phase. After the initial launch comms, further in-person engagement was undertaken to encourage residents to join the citizens panel and to highlight work being delivered by the project.

EY STEM

Early Years STEM engagement took place at a number of Local Development Plan events held across Moray during 2023, which included introducing the project to local residents.

Housing Mix Delivery

Updates were provided on the appointment of the design team for the Dallas Dhu phase of the Housing Mix Delivery in April 2023, following community engagement. The progress of activity in Dufftown was shared at drop-in exhibitions and the South Street development was shared as part of drop in session promoting the wider regeneration of this part of Elgin in December 2023.

MAATIC

Due to the nature of negotiations with partners involved and changes being made to the project vision, limited public engagement took place during 2023. Further information will be communicated during 2024, once there is clarity on the vision for this skills intervention project.

MICM

Communications activity has been limited as the project worked to develop their full business case and move away from co-locating with MAATIC to a stand along facility on the Forres Enterprise Park. The project entered delivery in early 2024 and communications are planned as the service hub offering is established in time for it's opening by autumn 2024.



7. Programme structure and governance structure

7.1 Structure of Moray Growth Deal activity and Officers involved

Following the recruitment of programme and project teams during in the first half of 2022, there has been continuity and stability in the majority of roles during 2023. This has helped maintain the pace of activity and is a contributing factor to the progress that has been made.

The roles that have changed during 2023 include:

- Lynne Owen has joined the Programme Management Office as a Programme Officer
- Allane Hay stepped down as Project Manager of the Business Enterprise Hub following completion of the full business case. Samantha Scott, who had been working with Allane, has now taken up this role.
- The lead body for MAATIC is now the UHI-Executive Office, with a new SRO (Max Brown, Director of Transformation) and PM (Steven Gregg).

Executive oversight of the Moray Growth Deal

- Rhona Gunn, Depute Chief Executive and Moray Growth Deal Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) (Moray Council)
- Jim Grant, Head of Development Services (Moray Council) – day to day oversight

Programme Management Office

- Michael Kelly, Programme Manager (Moray Council)
- Lynne Owen, Programme Officer (Moray Council)

Project Delivery

Teams in place within different organisations working to deliver the eight projects that make up the Moray Growth Deal.

Bus Revolution (led by Moray Council)

PM: Stevie Robertson, Senior Project Manager

SRO: Nicola Moss, Head of Environmental and Commercial Services

Early Years STEM (led by Moray Council)

PM: Sarah Barnes, Senior Project Manager

SRO: Hazel Sly, Early Years Service Manager

Business Enterprise Hub (led by UHI-Moray)

PM: Samantha Scott, BE Hub Project Manager and Deputy Head of Academic Partnerships at UHI-Moray

SRO: David Patterson, UHI-Moray Principal

Housing Mix Delivery (led by Moray Council)

PM: Hilda Puskas, Senior Project Manager

SRO: Gary Templeton, Strategic Planning and Development Manager

Cultural Quarter (led by Moray Council)

PM: Claire English, Senior Project Manager

SRO: Jim Grant, Head of Growth and Development

MAATIC (led by UHI-Executive Office)

PM: Steven Gregg, Project Manager at UHI Executive Office

SRO: Max Brown, Director of Transformation at UHI Executive Office

Digital Health (led by the Digital Health Institute)

PM: Marie Simpson, Programme Manager

SRO: Janette Hughes, Director of Planning and Performance

MICM (led by HIE)

PM: David Howie, Head of Strategic Projects

SRO: David Reid, Area Manager (Moray)

7.2 Summary of assurance activity progressed during 2023

The Deal has a series of assurance 'gates' in place that, when triggered, require submissions to be made to the MGD Board for approval to progress.

Gate					
A	B	C	D	E	F
Approval of Strategic Outline Case (SOC)	Approval of Outline Business Case (OBC)	Approval of Full Business Case (FBC)	Closure of a project	Change request to previously agreed baseline	In-life review

Gates A-E are project led requests, whereas Gate F is a schedule of in-life reviews initiated by the PMO that allows the MGD Board to take a more in-depth look at projects that are in delivery. During 2023 the MGD Board considered the following assurance activity:

Date	Project	Assurance gate	Description	Status
Jan 2023	DHI	E: Change	A new financial profile for the project was presented in light of a financial underspend in financial year 2022/23.	Decision delayed, more information required
Feb 2023	MICM	E: Change	Due to a lack of certainty on the preferred site for MAATIC and both parties planning to co-locate, request for MICM FBC submission date to be delayed until May 2023.	Approved
Mar 2023	DHI	E: Change	Updated change request submitted following advancement of Q4 spend and the project being able to determine a more accurate profile for 2022/23 spend.	Approved
Mar 2023	BE Hub	E: Change	Request to change the FBC submission date to the MGD Board to June 2023.	Approved
Apr 2023	EY STEM	E: Change	Revised preferred delivery model presented that is affordable within existing capital and revenue budget allocations.	Approved

Date	Project	Assurance gate	Description	Status
Apr 2023	HMD	E: Change	To enable evidence form the Housing Demand and Need Assessment, proposal to adjust the FBC submission date to September 2023.	Approved
May 2023	MICM	E: Change	Request to decouple the project from MAATIC regarding site location, with a view to progressing a preferred location of Forres Enterprise Park. Project also requested an additional 3 months to finalise the FBC.	Approved
Jun 2023	Bus Revolution	E: Change	Proposal to make a small amendment to the financial model, moving £19,3500 that was underspent in financial year 2022/23 into 2023/24.	Approved
Aug 2023	MAATIC	C: FBC approval	Full Business Case (FBC) submitted for approval.	Decision delayed, revised version required following Board comments.
Aug 2023	BE Hub	C: FBC approval	Full Business Case (FBC) submitted for approval.	Approved
Aug 2023	MICM	C: FBC approval	Full Business Case (FBC) submitted for approval.	Approved
Aug 2023	EY STEM	E: Change	Request to change the FBC submission date from October 2023 to January 2024 to align with the delivery of outputs from professional advisors.	Approved

Date	Project	Assurance gate	Description	Status
Sept 2023	CQ	E: Change	Following dialogue with the Governments, proposal presented to take a phased approach to the FBC due to the different construction horizons for Elgin Town Hall and Grant Lodge. FBC submission date changed to March 2024.	Approved
Sept 2023	MAATIC	C: FBC approval	Full Business Case (FBC) submitted for approval.	Approved, but with revisions to be made to the document
Sept 2023	HMD	C: FBC approval	Full Business Case (FBC) submitted for approval.	Approved
Oct 2023	DHI	F: In-life review	In depth review of the project, with a focus on the status of the different living labs.	Approved
Nov 2023	Bus Revolution	F: In-life review	In depth review of the status of the project, with a focus on data from the first six months of m.connect services.	Approved
Dec 2023	DHI	E: Change	In light of the Rural Centre for Excellence securing a longer term funding package from the Scottish Government, request to change the delivery window of the project by one year (to 2026) to realise opportunities associated with the creation of a more integrated digital solutions.	Approved

7.3 Audit activity undertaken during 2023

Building on the scrutiny provided by the MGD Board and establishment of an in-life review process for projects that are in delivery, it's expected that activity will be the subject of periodic audits.

During the term of this report, the following internal audit activity has been progressed:

- Closure of the 2022 Moray Council Internal Audit: Following a 2022 internal audit by Moray Council that rated the project's control of the audit scope as substantial, the Deal was asked to implement five recommendations. Subsequently, a report¹ was presented to the Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 22 November 2023 informing members that all of the recommendations have been successfully closed.
- Digital Health Internal Audit: Scheduled to mark the second anniversary of the project being in delivery, the University of Strathclyde Internal Audit Service undertook an audit of the Digital Health project. The scope focused on internal project controls.

¹ Closure report on the 2022 MGD Internal Audit that is available on the Council's website



April 2024