

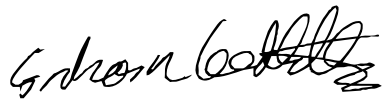


Public Performance Report 2020



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Graham Leadbitter
Council Leader



Roddy Burns
Chief Executive



Moray Council launched its corporate plan for 2019-2024, committing to a set of priorities to improve the lives of the area's residents.

These priorities are under three headings: **our people**, **our place** and **our future**. The council's first objective is to provide opportunities for people to be the best they can be throughout their lives, with a strong and sustained focus on those individuals and groups in our society who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination. It also commits to empowering and supporting communities to build capacity and have a greater say in their local services. The third element of the corporate plan is to drive economic development to create a vibrant economy for the future. While delivering these priorities we will also work towards creating a sustainable council that provides valued services to our communities.

To see how Moray Council is performing on all services, follow this link:

<https://scotland.mylocalcouncil.info/>



Our place, people and future

Moray is a largely rural area covering a land mass of 2,238km². It has a long coastline on the Moray Firth with harbours, fishing villages and some world-class beaches. The area's population is 95,520, rising from 91,000 in 2011. The main centre of population is Elgin, which is home to more than one quarter of the people living in Moray. Other main towns are Forres, Buckie, Lossiemouth and Keith, which each have populations of between 5,000 and 10,000.

The area's population is represented by 26 councillors, currently led by a minority SNP administration. The 26 members of the council are divided into four groups, these are SNP (eight councillors), Conservative (nine councillors), Moray Open Group (four councillors), Moray Alliance Group (three councillors), one Labour councillor and an Independent councillor.

The council's corporate management team (CMT) work with councillors to establish priorities for services and a programme of continuous improvement. Following an independent analysis in 2019 the council's senior management structure was reviewed to provide more focussed strategic leadership and direction to meet the challenges of the future as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The new structure, approved in September 2019, reduced the previous CMT of five officers to the current team of four: the chief executive, two deputy chief executives and the chief officer of Moray Integration Joint Board.

They in turn are supported by 9 permanent heads of service (also reduced by one) and a workforce of around 4,700, equivalent to around 3,500 full time staff. Delivering the wide range of services we're responsible for is assisted by a range of contracts with both the private and third sector.

Planning for the best possible outcomes

Moray Council's priorities on behalf of the area's residents are set out in our Corporate Plan. Overarching these themes is the continued focus on financial stability. The Corporate Plan for 2019 – 2024 was developed and shaped following wide community engagement.

Our strategic approach to financial planning is aimed at achieving financial stability. General funding from Scottish Government has been reduced over the past 10 years and in recent budgets we have increasingly used reserves accrued over the last 15 years to cushion the effect on services of this reduced funding. However, during this year this trend was reversed and we are now in surplus having added £6.8m to the general fund, with the Accounts Commission reporting on our "effective" financial management.

To create a sustainable operating model the council recently agreed an Improvement and Modernisation Programme. This programme aims to reduce costs by changing the way in which we operate, along with a slimmer, more flexible senior management structure.

In addition to general grant funding from the Scottish Government, we get specific grant funding for certain government priorities, such as the national programme of enhanced Early Learning and Childcare. The council's core funding is increasingly ring-fenced and linked to the current Scottish Government's priorities. This impacts on those services not identified as a priority by Scottish Government – such as road maintenance, waste collection and public toilets – which have to bear the brunt of any savings. However, the council has managed its resources to continue to provide the highest level of service possible within our finite resources.

To offset the impact of reduced funding and ring-fencing, the council can charge for some of the services we deliver. Income generation from this area is seen as an increasingly important means of protecting essential service delivery.

In a challenging environment, Moray Council achieved much for the residents of the area in 2019/2020. Some of the highlights that improved living, working and learning in Moray are these:



Our People

Working in partnership with other social landlords, the council began building 250 affordable homes in Moray – a £9.7m investment funded by Scottish Government at sites in Elgin, Keith, Buckie, Mosstodloch, Hopeman and Aberlour.



More than £160,000 was awarded in grants to help the council's private sector partners in Moray's Early Years provision to prepare for expansion of the service.

Over 40 new Early Years staff taken on at council nurseries.



Councillors endorsed a strategy and plan to tackle poverty this year. The Fairer Moray Forum is spearheading the action on behalf of Moray Community Planning Partnership.

1200 P6 pupils from every primary school in Moray learn about STEM in the workplace through council and RAF partnership.



Moray Leisure enjoyed impressive growth in 12 months since joining the Moray-wide Fit-Life scheme, with over 3,500 new subscriptions to the scheme and 100% increase in use of the facility. A new 100-station fitness suite was installed in April 2019 and additional fitness classes have been added to the programme, meaning Moray Leisure now offers more adult fitness classes per week than any other facility in the north of Scotland.



A pilot programme for gypsy / traveller stopover sites in Moray was approved as part of COSLA's Negotiated Stoppings pilot across five council areas.

Education

Within Education, attainment is a key priority and progress in this area is being monitored rigorously across Primary and Secondary using target setting approaches to progress this improvement priority.

Corporate Plan Priority: Provide opportunities where young people can achieve their potential to be the best they can be:

Achievement for Curriculum for Excellent Levels for Broad General Education Literacy and Numeracy

- There has been improvement across all stages for both Literacy and Numeracy, and in Moray we continue to progress towards 'stretch' aims and national rates.
- Primary 1, 4 and 7 Literacy has increased from 58% to 65% and Numeracy from 64% to 70%. The national averages are 72% and 79% respectively.
- For S3 pupils attainment at third level Literacy has increased from 79% to 83% and Numeracy from 82% to 92%; national averages being 88% and 90% respectively.
- Our Moray Learning and Teaching Strategy is supporting further work on moderation and improvement in these measures.

Key measure of pupils achieving 5 or more awards at SCQF level 5 or higher:

- Rate of pupils achieving 5 Level 5 increased by 4% to 61% (2018/19). Moray rank 19th (national average 63%, this is an improvement from 2017/18 attainment of 57%)

Key measure of school leavers with 1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 4 or better:

- Percentage of leavers achieving 1 or more awards at Level 4 or better increased to 96.4% (2018/19), up from 95.8%. Moray is above the national rate (96.3%).

Percentage of LAC leavers with 1 or more qualifications at SCQF level 4 or better:

- Percentage of LAC leavers achieving 1 or more awards at Level 4 or better increased to 76.9% (2018/19), up from 75%. Moray is above the national rate (76.1%).

Corporate Plan outcome: Young people are better prepared for life beyond school and for the workplace

- 92.8% school leavers entered an initial positive destination. This has decreased by 0.8% from the previous year.

We are improving administrative procedure to capture leaver data and are improving pathway planning, and expect our 2019/20 indicators to improve Moray's rank from the current 31 and to narrow the gap with national average of 95.1%.

In Moray, more young people leaving school enter employment (31.5%) than the national average (22.9%) and the curriculum offer in place supports destinations into employment, further and higher education as well as training and apprenticeship opportunities.

Percentage of leavers achieving 1 or more award at SCQF Level 6:

- The rate of leavers achieving 1 or more awards at level 6 decreased to 58.7% from 61% in previous year. The national rate is 66.2%.
- Schools are working collaboratively to increase the number of Level 6 courses for all pupils who stay in at school to support progression and achievement.

Percentage of leavers attaining literacy by SCQF level:

- School leavers attaining level 5 literacy was 80.5% (2018/19), up from 78.4%. Moray is below the national rate of 81.7%

Percentage of leavers attaining numeracy by SCQF level:

- School leavers attaining level 5 numeracy was 63.9% (2018/19), up from 62.4%. The national rate is 68.8% which is above the Moray average.



Leisure Services

Due to the extensive marketing campaign deployed by the council, there was a notable increase at leisure centres across Moray.

Moray Leisure Centre

Swimming pool use: In 2018/19 – 133,627 sessions, increased in 2019/20 to 207,115.

Health & Wellbeing: (gym, exercise classes etc.) 2018/19 – 84,756 sessions, increased three-fold in 2019/20 to 235,035.

Moray Council-run facilities

Health & Wellbeing: (gym, exercise classes etc.) in 2018/19 was 118,091, increased to 123,217 in 2019/20.

Swimming pool sessions: in 2018/19 was 252,425, but decreased to 234,284 in 2019/20.

Corporate Plan Outcome: Councillors agreed a progressive, investment-driven £300m strategy for the future of Moray’s learning estate.

Corporate Plan Outcome: Improved outcomes for our most vulnerable young people and families

The number of children on the Child Protection register is 47, while national data shows the total number of children on the Child Protection register is 2,599. The rate per 1,000 aged 0-15 by local authority shows a Scottish average of 2.8, with Moray recording a rate of 2.9.

Since a high in 2016/17 when 81 children were on the register, the numbers registered have fallen year-on-year to 47. This is due to the more coordinated work undertaken by the Child Protection Officer Group (CPOG), bringing together all agencies such as police, council, social work and the NHS.



Our Place

Corporate Plan Priority: Empower communities to build capacity by becoming more informed, involved and influential in service design and delivery.

The two-year programme of support for seven town halls and community centres undertaking a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) was completed, with six of the seven groups achieving Keystone awards. Continued support will remain in place for ongoing CATs

Moray Locality Plans are in place in both Buckie Central East and New Elgin East. Community participation in the development of these plans was significant. Action areas have been identified and agreed with the community for the plans, and monitoring systems have been established. The Community Monitoring Group in Buckie received praise in March from HMiE inspectors, describing it as an excellent example of positive community engagement.

Extensive community involvement with the Lossiemouth Community Development Trust to progress phase 1 of the replacement East Beach footbridge.

Development of engagement with the public on the future of council services and progress towards developing an engagement strategy has been slower than hoped as has the progress of the Corporate Plan engagement process. However, both are identified as priorities in the 2020-22 Service Plan.

Corporate Plan Outcome: 1% of council budget allocated through Participatory Budgeting Framework.

This action has been agreed and the percentage of the council's budget will be allocated to the community through Participatory Budgeting. As a result, more of our activities in Participatory Budgeting and other actions, services and plans will be more influenced by the communities they serve. To underpin and strengthen this, an engagement strategy was established for 20/21.

Extensive community involvement in replacing the East Beach footbridge.



£1.7m committed to stabilising works to coastal hillsides in Portknockie after a series of landslides.



Forres Town Hall transferred to Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) by the Community Asset Transfer process.



Major £1.8m refurbishment of Craigellachie Bridge on the A95 'whisky road' begins.



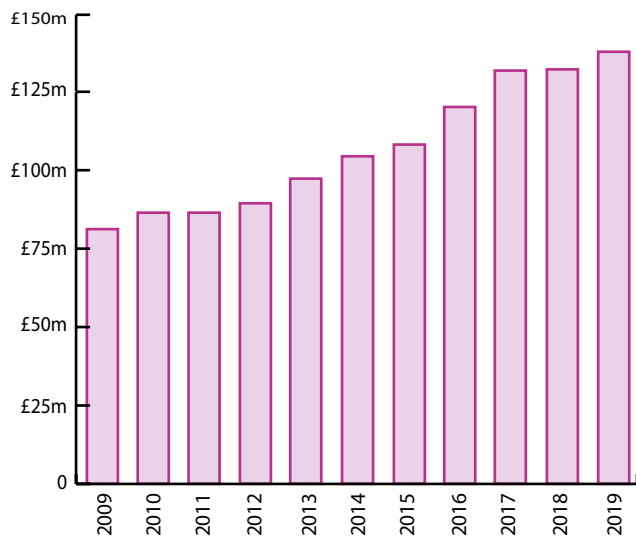
Our Future

Corporate Plan Priority: Working in partnership with other stakeholders, create a step change in the regional economy to enable inclusive economic growth.

Moray Council supported the establishment of a Tourism Bid in the area to fund the development of the tourism industry. In 2019 tourism in Moray was worth £134m, an increase of 3.5% on the previous year.

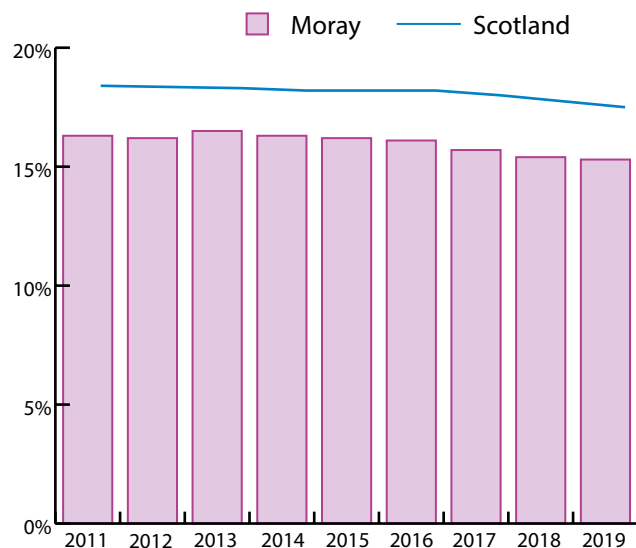
Corporate Plan Outcome: Increase economic impact of tourism in Moray.

Corporate Plan Measure: Economic impact of tourism by year.



Corporate Plan Outcome: Increase the number of 16-29 year olds living and working in Moray.

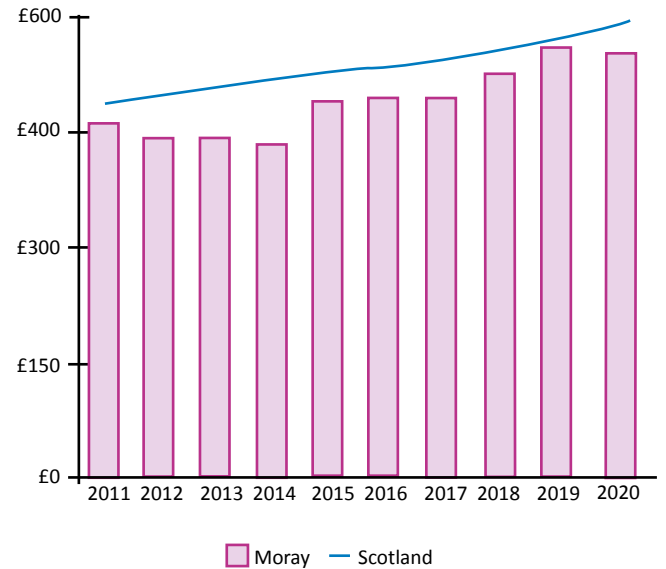
Corporate Plan Measure: Percentage of population aged 16-29.



Corporate Plan Outcome: Better employment, skills and earnings – increase in higher skilled jobs and wage levels.

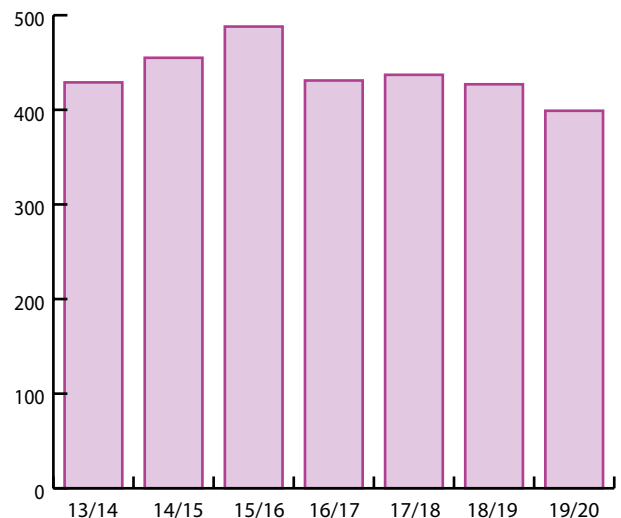
Corporate Plan Measure: Reduce the number of people earning less than the living wage. Increase in average pay levels.

Median Gross Weekly Pay (full time workers 16-64, excluding overtime)



Corporate Plan Outcome: Apprenticeships in key sectors are increased.

Corporate Plan Measure: Modern Apprenticeship starts by year.



Corporate Plan Outcome: Achievement of targets, indicators and outcomes identified in Climate Change Action Plan, and increased provision and use of electric vehicles and plan with supporting infrastructure.

Corporate Plan Measure: Moray Council to be carbon neutral by 2030. Number of electric car charging points to be increased by 3% per year from 2020; Annual CO2 vehicle output reduced by 14 tonnes per annum

Corporate Plan Outcome: Climate change strategy and action plan drafted and due to be undergo public consultation and approval in 2020/2021.

Corporate Plan Measure: Over a quarter of schools have delivered bikeability sessions in 2019/20. Provision will be increased over the next five years to ensure all primary schools deliver these sessions to level 2, with 50% of all secondary schools delivering level 3.



Investment of £1m sees more than 80 council services now accessible 24/7 online.



Scotland's first rural electric bus piloted in Moray on a hail-and-ride route between Aberlour and Forres.

A transformative Moray Growth Deal: Worth over £100m, with £32.5m each from UK and Scottish Government announced. To be bolstered with further investment from regional and private sector partners, the Growth Deal will make a huge difference to the area's economy over the next decade.



In a partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Business Gateway, locally-based SMEs engaged in the new Supplier Development Programme to assist in the securing of public sector contracts.



First steps taken towards replacing the iconic footbridge at Lossiemouth's East Beach.

Despite the tough financial conditions the council operates within, investment in Moray's infrastructure continued apace.

£56.7m was spent on new schools, road improvements, waste management facilities and other works. This compares with £26.8m the previous year.

We have continued to assess charges for non-statutory services, such as garden waste and car parks, to ensure they reflect the true cost of delivery, and review their efficiency in order that they remain competitive.



On behalf of the Moray community, we spent:



£34.5m

On new schools, improvements to existing schools and facilities for early learning and childcare.



£8.9m

On waste management facilities, including a joint project with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils to build an energy from waste plant in Aberdeen city.



£4.4m

On road improvements, better road safety measures and more sustainable travel facilities, such as cycle lanes and pathways.



£3.1m

On fuel-efficient vehicles and electric car chargers.



£1.6m

Various works at harbours and Portknockie landslip.



£1.5m

Repairing Moray's bridges.



£1.2m

Street lighting.



£0.9m

On ICT equipment to enable more efficient working.



£0.6m

On maintaining council-owned land and buildings.

2020/2021

We are all in uncharted waters; the pandemic and potential impact of Brexit on the local economy can only be guessed at, and it is local authorities across the UK that will be at the forefront of any efforts to maintain some balance in public life. In addition to these unknowns, the council expects to make more savings in order to balance our budget. But, inevitably, our forecasts have been completely changed by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, the council's main risks are:

- Uncertainty as to the impact on the COVID-19 pandemic on the council's finances, the local economy, the national economy and what this will mean for public spending generally.
- The local impact of Brexit.
- Our school estate requires an estimated £300m investment to bring facilities up to the Scottish Government's recommended 'B-B' standard.
- Managing the scale and pace of our programme of transformation.
- Delivering on our improvement journey to address issues identified in our Best Value Review.

The council is endeavouring to manage these risks by:

- Close financial monitoring and regular review.
- Working within the Moray Economic Partnership to support the local economy and maximise the early effect of the Moray Growth Deal.
- Assessing vulnerability issues regarding Brexit.
- Progressing implementation of our new Learning Estate Strategy.
- Implement our Improvement and Modernisation Programme, using lessons from the pandemic to redesign how we deliver services.
- Driving forward improvement through our Best Value Action Plans.

