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**REPORT TO: PLANNING & REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
8 OCTOBER 2019**

**SUBJECT: MORAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015 - ANNUAL  
MONITORING REPORT**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 This report asks the Committee to consider and approve the Moray Local Development Plan (MLDP) Annual Monitoring Report 2019.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (E) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the Review and Preparation of Strategic and Local Plans.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee considers and approves the Monitoring Report as set out in Appendix 1.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following a report to a special meeting of this Committee on 24 June 2015 (paragraph 5 of the minute refers), it was agreed that an annual monitoring report providing information on the MLDP Action Programme, Housing and Employment Land Audits and demographic changes would be submitted to Committee (paragraph 5 of the minute refers). It was also subsequently agreed at a meeting of this Committee on the 19 April 2016 that an annual Local Review Body (LRB) report be prepared and reported to the Committee as part of the MLDP Monitoring Report (paragraph 10 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 No Annual Monitoring Report was prepared in 2018 due to work pressures in preparing the MLDP 2020. Future Annual Monitoring Reports will be more delivery focused and consist of a review of the Delivery Programme which will accompany the MLDP 2020.

## 4. **ANNUAL MONITORING**

4.1 The annual MLDP Monitoring Report in **Appendix 1** provides:

- An overview of demographic changes and projections;
- An overview of the Housing and Employments land Audits;
- An update on policy documents and Supplementary Guidance;
- An overview of progress on development sites in all settlements including actions to be undertaken; and
- A review of LRB cases.

4.2 On June 30 2018, the population of Moray was 95,520 which was a decrease of 0.3% from 2017. The latest population projections from the National Records of Scotland (NRS) project that between 2018 and 2026 Moray's population is expected to increase from 95,520 to 100,251 which is an increase of 4.4%. This long term projection has significantly changed from previous projections in the 2017 Monitoring Report which suggested that Moray's population may flat line or even decrease over this long term period.

4.3 A breakdown in population group shows that between 2018 and 2026 the 18 to 26 age group is expected to see the largest percentage decrease (-10%) and the 75+ age group is projected to see the largest percentage increase (+34.2%). It also suggests that retaining young people will be a future challenge. This highlights that Moray is facing an ageing population which will have implications for local service provision such as health care facilities for the elderly, education, and housing. It could put strain on housing supply and house type provision such as the need for more accessible housing to meet these new needs and requirements.

4.4 The Housing Land Audit was reported to this Committee on 21 May 2019 (paragraph 7 of the minute refers) and shows an effective housing land supply of 4,189, meeting Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) requirements to have a five year effective supply. The number of completions decreased from 382 in 2017 to 312 in 2018. Projected completions are estimated to increase over the next couple of years as sites within MLDP 2015 are built out and with the release of land for housing at Elgin South and Bilbohall. Completions have generally reflected the settlement hierarchy, with completions highest in the primary centre of Elgin, followed by the second tier settlements of Forres and Buckie, coastal villages east of the Spey, and Speyside. Development rates in Keith and Speyside continue to be low and Officers are looking at how existing sites can be made more effective including a project, which aims to address issues highlighted in the "Stimulating Housing in the Highlands and Islands" report published in September 2017.

4.5 The Employment Land Audit was reported to this Committee on 21 May 2019 (paragraph 6 of the minute refers). The Employment Land Audit 2019 identifies that as of 1 January 2019 there was 153.4 hectares of land (net) within the Established Land Supply. This is a decrease of 0.91 hectares since 2018 due to several sites being built out and a windfall site at Thomshill being removed due to a lapsed planning consent. 79.84 hectares (net) across 15 sites is classed as marketable/effective which is a decrease of 0.43 hectares

and two sites since 2018. This is due to construction completed at March Road SE (I3) Buckie, land under construction at Chanonry Elgin (I2), completion of a windfall site at West Whins Findhorn, occupation of yard space at Waterford Forres (I3) and occupation of yard space at Rothes Back Burn (I1). However, there continues to be a shortage in the number of immediately available sites. The emphasis on employment land is within the five main settlements with more limited supply in other towns with a limited supply of serviced sites in Forres and Speyside. This is being addressed through large new employment land releases in the MLDP 2020.

- 4.6 The 2017 Monitoring Report highlighted that a Quality Audit process was introduced to assess planning applications against the primary placemaking policy with the aim of raising urban design standards. The Quality Audit process involves a multi-disciplinary team of Council Officers from Development Plans, Development Management, Housing, and Transportation assessing proposals and working with developers to resolve design issues. Since the 2017 Monitoring Report this multi-disciplinary team has been expanded to include officers from Moray Council's Flood Risk Management Team and Scottish Natural Heritage. This approach has improved collaborative working across sections as well as improving the design of layouts by being able to embed innovative drainage solutions and improve biodiversity from the outset. An overview of how the process has improved the quality have layouts is included in **Appendix 1**. A revised Quality Audit was approved at a meeting of this Committee on 26 March 2019 (paragraph 10 of the minute refers) and will replace the existing Quality Audit on adoption of MLDP 2020.
- 4.7 Since the 2017 Monitoring Report work has been on going on a number of key policy areas, documents, and Supplementary Guidance. This can be summarised as follows;
- Work has continued to progress on the programme of masterplans and development briefs with the approval of the Elgin South, Bilbohall, Kinloss Golf Course, and Dallas Dhu masterplans. Five development briefs have been approved in Aberlour, Burghead, Elgin, Hopeman, and Forres;
  - Completion of the Open Space Strategy which provides a strategic vision for the provision, development, maintenance and management of open space;
  - Completion of the Woodland Strategy which identifies the key issues affecting forestry in Moray and highlights the opportunities that exist across the sector;
  - Adoption of updated Moray Onshore Wind Energy Guidance following approval by Scottish ministers;
  - Updated Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance;
  - Completion of the Elgin Transport Strategy;
  - Continue to develop a programme of youth engagement and on the work done during the LDP consultation;
  - Officers from Planning and Education are working together to identify the school estate requirements to 2035 to align with the LDP and anticipated growth; and

- Planning officers are working closely with officers from NHS Grampian to identify future healthcare requirements for GP's, dentists and pharmacy facilities to ensure that the necessary land requirements are available.
- 4.8 Since June 2017 the LRB reviewed 44 cases which is 45% higher than was reported in the 2017 Monitoring Report. This is due to the period under consideration being longer than that which was part of the 2017 Monitoring Report. Analysis shows that there was a 75/25% split between reviews being dismissed (refused) and upheld (approved). Housing in the Countryside applications still account for the majority of LRB cases (55%).
- 4.9 The Report provides an update on the levels of Developer Obligations that the Council received in 2017 and 2018. The table in **Appendix 1** shows that over this period a total of £6,213,246.00 was received in Developer Obligations and legal agreements.
- 4.10 The Report also provides an update on key policy areas such as housing in the countryside, open space, biodiversity, placemaking, and development in woodlands and how these have been incorporated into the next Local Development Plan. Future monitoring reports will provide updates on implementation of the Delivery Programme and a greater focus on policy outcomes and impacts.

## 5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

The MLDP plays a key role in supporting and facilitating the Community Planning Partnerships' priorities for a growing, diverse and sustainable economy, building a better future for our children and young people and empowering and connecting communities.

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

Preparation of the MLDP is a statutory responsibility for the Council.

### **(c) Financial implications**

None.

### **(d) Risk Implications**

The risk of not monitoring the MLDP would be an out of date evidence base being used for preparing the next MLDP. There could also be a failure to provide an effective housing and employment land supply. The Planning Bill (Scotland) which has recently been passed by the Scottish Parliament places greater emphasis upon the evidence base for LDP's, including the requirement for an "Evidence Report" to be prepared at the outset of the MLDP process.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

Preparing the MLDP and monitoring its performance are part of the workload of the Planning and Development section.

**(f) Property**

None.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed as the report is to inform the Committee on monitoring of the MLDP only.

**(h) Consultations**

The Corporate Director (Economic Development Planning & Infrastructure), the Head of Development Services, the Legal Services Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, Paul Connor (Principal Accountant), and Lissa Rowan (Committee Services Officer) have been consulted and their comments incorporated into the report.

**6. CONCLUSION**

**6.1 The MLDP Annual Monitoring Report provides an evidence base which can be used to influence future policy documents and the implementation of the MLDP 2020. The 2019 Monitoring Report identifies that Moray's long term population will continue to rise with demographic analysis showing that an ageing population will have implications for service and housing provision.**

**6.2 The report shows that good progress has been made on the preparation and completion of Supplementary Guidance and processes to help deliver development including a programme of masterplans and development briefs, Open Space Strategy, Woodlands Strategy, Wind Energy, Developer Obligations and Infrastructure Delivery Group. The report highlights that development interests continue to be focused in Elgin, Buckie and Forres, with lower activity in Keith. The Report shows the limited activity within third tier settlements particularly in Speyside and Coastal areas.**

**6.3 The Report identifies that there is a shortage of serviced employment land across Moray. The Report recognises that good progress is being made to improve urban design standards in new developments through the continued use of the Quality Audit process.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: