Moray Council

Wednesday, 16 December 2020

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a **Special Meeting** of the **Moray Council** is to be held at **remote locations via video conference**, on **Wednesday, 16 December 2020** at **14:00.**

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 11 and 12 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 Cultural Quarter Moray Growth Deal **5 - 76**

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

5 Learning Estate Strategy **77 - 122**

Report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development)

6 Review of Additional Support Needs - Staffing **123 - 128**

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development)

7	**Financial Planning** Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)	**129 - 136**
8	**Charging for Services** Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)	**137 - 140**
9	**Polling District and Place Review** Report by Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development)	**141 - 158**
10	**Delegation of Children and Families and Justice Services** Report by Interim Chief Officer, Moray Health and Social Care	**159 - 166**

Item(s) which the Committee may wish to consider with the Press and Public excluded

11 Future of Moray Training [Para 1]

- Information relating to staffing matters;

12 Housing Mix Delivery - Moray Growth Deal [Paras 8 & 9]

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person(s) for any matters referred to in section 27(1) of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968;
- Information on proposed terms and/or expenditure to be incurred by the Authority;

Any person attending the meeting who requires access assistance should contact customer services on 01343 563217 in advance of the meeting.

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.

THE MORAY COUNCIL

Moray Council

SEDERUNT

Councillor Shona Morrison (Chair)
Councillor Graham Leadbitter (Depute Chair)
Councillor George Alexander (Member)
Councillor James Allan (Member)
Councillor David Bremner (Member)
Councillor Frank Brown (Member)
Councillor Theresa Coull (Member)
Councillor John Cowe (Member)
Councillor Gordon Cowie (Member)
Councillor Paula Coy (Member)
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Councillor John Divers (Member)
Councillor Tim Eagle (Member)
Councillor Ryan Edwards (Member)
Councillor Claire Feaver (Member)
Councillor Donald Gatt (Member)
Councillor Marc Macrae (Member)
Councillor Aaron McLean (Member)
Councillor Maria McLean (Member)
Councillor Ray McLean (Member)
Councillor Louise Nicol (Member)
Councillor Laura Powell (Member)
Councillor Derek Ross (Member)
Councillor Amy Taylor (Member)
Councillor Sonya Warren (Member)
Councillor Walter Wilson (Member)

Clerk Name: Moira Patrick
Clerk Telephone:
Clerk Email: committee.services@moray.gov.uk

REPORT TO: SPECIAL MORAY COUNCIL ON 16 DECEMBER 2020

SUBJECT: CULTURAL QUARTER - MORAY GROWTH DEAL

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform Council of the Cultural quarter project in the Moray Growth Deal providing an update of progress and seeking approval of concepts and next steps.

1.2 This report is submitted to the Council in terms of Section III A (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to long-term financial plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:-

(i) consider and note the executive summary from the outline business case provided in Appendix 1;

(ii) consider and note the governance process associated with Growth Deal Projects for which the Council is the Lead Partner;

(iii) agree the high level funding requirement of £3.9m from the Council and note the overall project costs shown in the financial implications; and

(iv) agree to utilise the existing capital budget for the Growth Deal in 2020/21 to enable the next steps identified for the Cultural Quarter in para 5.1.

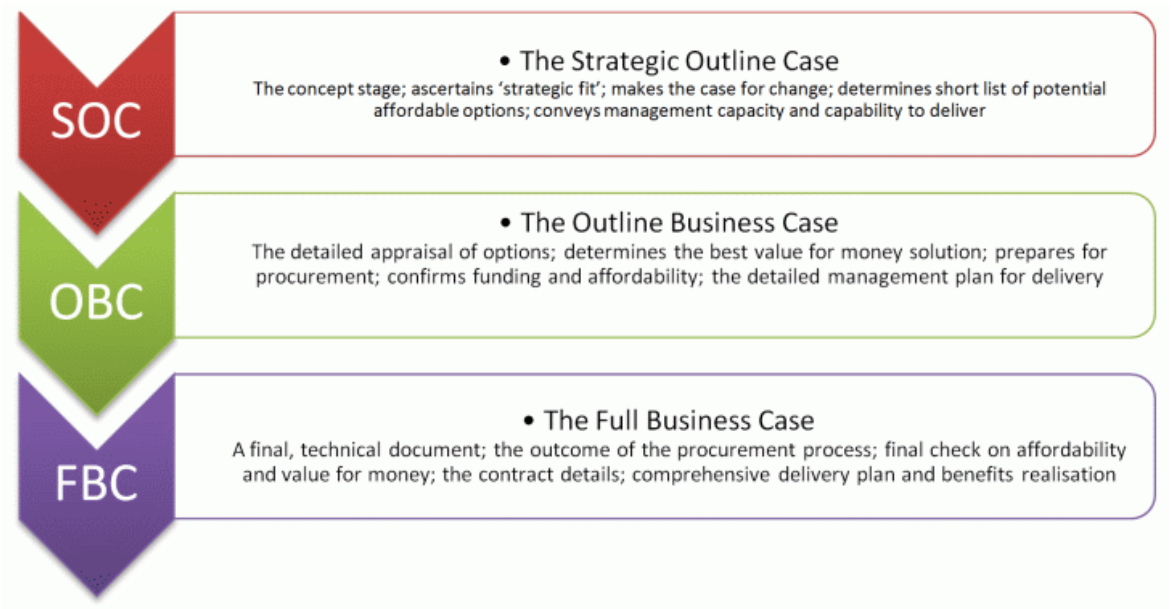
3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Moray Growth Deal Heads of Terms was signed on 24 August 2020. The projects included in the Heads of Terms are the Moray Aerospace, Advanced Technology and Innovation Campus; Business Enterprise Hub; Cultural Quarter; Housing Mix Delivery; Early Years STEM; Bus Revolution;

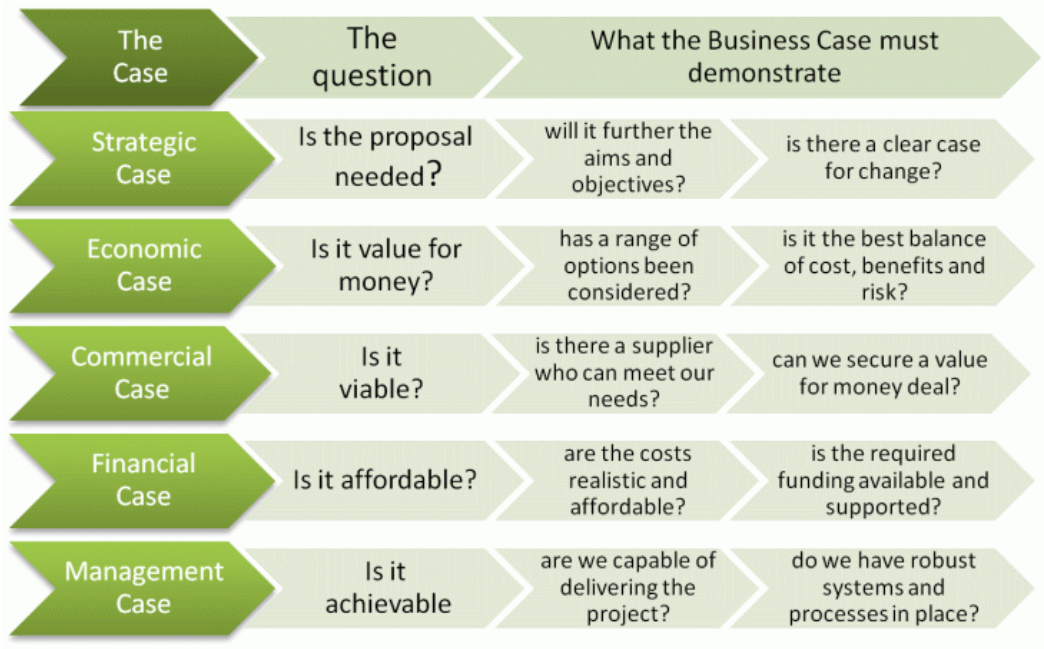
Manufacturing and Innovation for Moray; and Digital Health (now Digital Health and Care Innovation). https://www.mymoray.co.uk/application/files/1315/9767/9293/Moray_Growth_Deal_Projects.pdf.

3.2 Of these projects Moray Council is providing the programme lead and also project management support for the Cultural Quarter, Housing Mix delivery, Bus Revolution and Early Years Stem each of which is led by a senior officer acting as Project Senior Responsible Officer (SRO).

3.3 All projects in the Growth Deal must follow the project management processes set out in the Treasury Green Book which requires the development of a strategic outline case followed by the outline business case and then moving to the full business case as shown below.



3.4 The green book has a five case model as shown below, these cases are developed to varying degrees through the stages shown above for strategic, outline and full business case.



3.5 For the Growth Deal, all projects completed the strategic outline business cases to enable the signing of Heads of Terms in August 2020, and are now working to complete outline business cases by December 2020 for submission to the Scottish and UK Governments for assessment and feedback with a desire to get the final sign off for the Growth Deal by March 2021 which will then enable the drawdown of money to commence projects once Full Business Cases have been agreed.

3.6 Each project has a project board with a mix of stakeholders to assist in developing the business cases and moving the projects forward. Progress is monitored and assessed through the Growth Deal Programme Board and updates reported to Moray Economic Partnership and the Community Planning Board.

3.7 For the projects in which the Council is a lead partner, project updates will be reported to meetings of Moray Council for approval as necessary and will be monitored through the Transforming the Economy Board. The Cultural Quarter, Housing Mix, Bus Revolution and Early Years Stem are all projects where the Council is a major stakeholder in terms of the provision of assets, service or resources in the project and the projects will need continued consideration and support.

3.8 The Growth Deal funding from Scottish and UK Governments is provided as flat cash over what has now been confirmed as the 10 year period of the deal. This requires programming of projects across that 10 year timeline. However, in other deals the Local Authority lead has provided a degree of forward funding where this is considered necessary in economic terms. In some projects external financing can support this forward funding but many partners can neither borrow nor leverage private sector funding for this purpose and it is normal for Local Authorities to step in in such cases and provide this support to stimulate the local economy. This is particularly relevant at the current time as Moray looks to recover from the economic impact of the pandemic.

3.9 This is the first of a series of 5 reports which will come to the council ahead of the signing of the on the deal. This report and a further report on the Housing Delivery Mix project at this meeting and a further two reports regarding the Early Years Stem and the Bus Revolution projects along with a covering programme level report at a meeting to be confirmed in early 2021.

4. CULTURAL QUARTER

4.1 The Cultural Quarter has now completed the Outline Business Case (OBC) and, following several earlier iterations, this has been submitted to Scottish and UK Governments for review. The OBC executive summary is given in **Appendix 1** and the preferred option is outlined below.

4.2 The proposal is to create a vibrant Cultural Quarter space at the heart of Elgin that will support economic growth and cultural expansion within the city and wider region.

The project has 3 key elements:

1. Refurbishment of the currently unused Grant Lodge to create a high quality heritage attraction designed to increase the number of visitors to Moray and to encourage people to stay longer in the area. Grant Lodge is a B-listed building situated in Cooper Park built in the 18th century to a design by the Scottish Architect Robert Adam. The building has been boarded up since it was damaged by fire in 2003 but plans have been developed to refurbish and extend to accommodate proposals.

The project will build upon the strength of the heritage of Moray with a focus on food, drink, and textiles, including the vast array of world class food and drink offerings originating in Moray, as well as the obvious output from “Malt Whisky country”.

The Heritage Experience will complement existing facilities, showcasing not just Speyside whisky but also our region’s other food and drink, craft gins and beers, textiles, art, culture and heritage. With retail and

catering offerings the building will tell the region's stories using interactive exhibitions, installations and multimedia, offering visitors an authentic introduction to Moray Speyside. It will signpost visitors to the region's other tourist attractions (e.g. distillery visitor centres, golf courses, coastal outdoor activities, beaches, mountain and forestry trails, history and heritage) and towns, encouraging longer stays and additional spend.

Particular emphasis has been made within the business case on ensuring that the heritage experience compliments existing offerings throughout the area. Elgin is a central location which is close to all major transport links and provides easy access to all parts of Moray. It is also the most visited by tourists and therefore is ideal for signposting to other attractions throughout Moray.

2. Refurbishment, extension, and rebranding of the Town Hall to house a multi-purpose theatre/performance space, small cinema, rehearsal rooms, and potential gallery space to create an improved cultural offering and support local creative industries. The refurbished facility will have a flexible configuration to accommodate conferences and events for the business tourism market, complementing provision offered by the hotel and providing scope for expansion of existing events, such as Spirit of Speyside Distilled.

The Town Hall will provide additional capacity and opportunity for the region's creative and cultural organisations, and practitioners, and will provide employment and training opportunities for students from UHI Moray College across a range of courses. The provision of a modern theatre and associated performing arts facilities and an increased number of events available locally will reduce the need for people in Moray to travel to Inverness or Aberdeen, make arts and culture more accessible, and support the development of an evening economy in Elgin Town Centre.

3. Provision of a high quality hotel (to be privately funded) to address a much-needed and long acknowledged market gap in the region's tourism

infrastructure, and open up Moray's tourism industry to new markets. Moray lacks both quantity and diversity of accommodation supply. The region's largest quality hotel has just 52 rooms.

The result is that we are unable to meet the ongoing demands from leisure visitors for high-quality accommodation, to service coach tour markets, or to accommodate business conferences. There is a particular lack of accommodation provision in the Elgin area.

A 60-100 bedroomed quality hotel will address this long-established gap in the region's accommodation provision and serve both the leisure and business tourism markets and open up Moray's growing tourism industry to a market not currently catered for within the region.

Each element will be linked together by enhanced public space and road traffic reconfiguration to ensure easy and safe walking and cycling connections to the town centre.

In developing the OBC concept plans for Grant Lodge and the Town Hall were produced following stakeholder engagement and to ensure that what was being proposed matched stakeholder expectations. These are given in **Appendix 2** and **Appendix 3**.

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 The Cultural Quarter is currently programmed to commence in 2024, however there will be opportunities for additional external funding towards this project and so in the meantime it is proposed to move the Cultural Quarter project forward to the point it is shovel ready so that it can take advantage of any slippage in other Growth Deal projects or external funding that may become available that would allow an earlier start than 2024.

5.2 The project is at the stage where the following actions need to be taken: Design and preparation of tender documents for Grant Lodge, Design and preparation of tender documents for Town Hall, Hotel commercial appraisal, contaminated land and flood risk survey on hotel site, amendment of Cooper

Park Trust deed, Road and active travel assessment and design, Design and master planning for Cooper park improvements and public arts strategy.

5.3. Finance is available within the Capital programme for the Growth Deal projects in 2020/21 to enable these steps to be commenced.

5.4 For the Design of Grant Lodge and Town Hall, stakeholder groups have been formed to participate in the tender and development process.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The Cultural Quarter proposals will contribute to achieve the corporate plan priority to promote economic development and growth, also the LOIP priority of a growing and sustainable economy.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council considers support for economic development issues on their merits, against the objective to facilitate sustainable economic growth and the desired outcomes of the Ten Year Plan and Corporate Plan.

(c) Financial implications

£250,000 is available in the capital plan for 2020/21 for the development of projects in the Moray Growth Deal it is intended to fund the next steps on the Cultural Quarter from this approved budget. The overall project cost is estimated at £31 million which includes an estimated £9 million private sector funding in a hotel, £9m for Town Hall and £9 million for Grant Lodge and up to £4 million related to public space, the Council contribution will be £3.9 million.

Initial costs related to the commencement of work in identified in paragraph 5.2 for 2020/21 are estimated to be £70k. The overall estimated costs for these initial steps are £600k with £175k being provided from HIE subject to approval with the remaining spending for these occurring in 2021/22.

(d) Risk Implications

The Green Book process is designed to minimise risk associated with projects, the final signing of the Growth Deal is reliant on completion of outline business cases across all projects and could cause delay if not achieved by March, having a shovel ready project in the Growth Deal minimises cash flow risk across the programme.

(e) Staffing Implications

Where possible staff related project cost will be capitalised. The current work is being accommodated within existing staffing resources, as the fund is for capital expenditure only. However the service's staffing structure was reviewed with this in mind in 2019.

(f) Property

None

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
An impact assessment is provided in **Appendix 4.**

(h) Consultations
Consultation has taken place with the Depute Chief Executive Economy, Environment and Finance, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the Environmental Protection Manager, the Transportation Manager, Development Management & Building Standards Manager, the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development, the Equal Opportunities Officer, the Democratic Services Manager and Chief Financial Officer and their comments incorporated within the report.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The Cultural Quarter is a significant project within the Moray Growth Deal, the report sets out the governance arrangements and next steps required to position the project to be shovel ready and minimise risk to cash flow across the Growth Deal programme.

Author of Report: Jim Grant, Head of Economic Growth and Development

Background Papers:

Ref:

1. Appendix1 Cultural Quarter OBC -Executive Summary

What are Moray's challenges?

Initial workshops held with key stakeholders from the public and private sector, business and community representatives identified a number of key challenges in the Moray area.

- Business Community and NHS Grampian highlighted issues with recruiting professional staff to the area, with the lack of cultural and evening economy offerings identified as a key factor,
- an online community survey highlighted leisure / recreation as one of the top areas for improvement,
- workshops with students in the local college identified issues with retention and attraction of young people in the area, which backed up the findings of the Highlands and Islands commissioned report "Young People and the Highlands and Islands: Maximising Opportunities" issued in November 2018. They also identified leisure / recreation as one of the top 3 reasons why 70% of them were planning to leave the area,
- engagement with travel industry professionals and local business leaders reinforced the requirement for a 100 room 4/5 star hotel in the area.

The workshops identified over 120 potential projects to improve the economic situation within Moray, with the help of Inclusive Growth Diagnostic data which compared statistics to national averages and key comparator areas.

These initial project ideas were rationalised and prioritised to create a manageable group of key projects for which Strategic Outline Cases were developed to explore these opportunities more fully. At the same time a vision and objectives were developed for the Growth Deal and these were tested through extensive consultation and engagement exercises with the community and with businesses in the area to ensure that the right issues were being addressed within the proposals.

How will we meet these challenges?

Culture-led regeneration is an emerging trend amongst many UK cities and towns. The economic appraisal commissioned with consultants identified examples such as Belfast and Dundee leading the way, but others such as Folkestone and St Ives providing useful comparison.

There is strong evidence that investment in culture and creativity has the potential of generating socio-economic impacts such as strengthening communities and skills, increasing employment and boosting tourism.

The consultation exercises during development of the Moray Growth Deal emphasised the need for cultural/leisure facilities in order to attract and retain young people to live and work in the area and to meet the growth and development of tourism aspirations for the region.

To meet this need the Cultural Quarter was identified as a project within the Growth Deal with two clear aims:

1. Increase tourism in Moray by providing a focal point to draw in additional visitors and signpost them to attractions right across the area.
2. To provide an enhanced cultural and evening economy offering which will help to attract and retain young people in the area.

Who is involved?

In order to develop the Outline Business Case a stakeholder analysis was undertaken to identify the key groups and individuals to form a project board to direct this work. The board consists of representatives from Moray Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Moray College/University of the Highlands and Islands, Visit Moray Speyside, Grant Lodge Trust/Friends of Grant Lodge, Elgin Town Hall for the Community, and Robertson Regeneration and Property.

How did we identify the solution?

A benefits identification and mapping workshop was held in August 2018 to serve three purposes;

- to align stakeholder views and ensure that everyone was working to the same aim;
- to identify inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts to enable the logic model to be developed;
- to identify the key benefits to be measured in order to demonstrate success.

Following on from these a number of options appraisal workshops were undertaken with a wider range of stakeholders to identify the options to be appraised during the economic case.

The results of economic appraisal undertaken by specialist consultants were then supplemented with additional work to evaluate and monetise the social / inclusive growth impacts of the options (assisted by the Fraser of Allander Institute at Strathclyde University), and the board made the final decision on the preferred option in September 2019.

Although the focus of the Heritage Experience was amended slightly in November 2019, following advice from Scottish Government advisors and Visit Scotland, this was considered to have little impact on the Social Cost Benefit Analysis for the project.

What is the solution?

The proposal is to create a vibrant Cultural Quarter space at the heart of Elgin that will support economic growth and cultural expansion within the city and wider region.

The project has 3 key elements:

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markets and open up Moray's growing tourism industry to a market not currently catered for within the region.

Each element will be linked together by enhanced public space and road traffic reconfiguration to ensure easy and safe walking and cycling connections to the town centre.

How much will it cost?

The project is currently estimated to cost in excess of £31 million. This total includes; £9 million of private sector funding to cover the development of the hotel proposal; £6 million for refurbishment of Grant Lodge plus around £3 million for the technological fit-out of the Heritage Experience, £9 million to cover design and build costs for the renovation of the Town Hall; £4 million on upgrading of public space and access routes, plus all ancillary costs.

How will it be delivered?

It is expected that the work will be phased, with separate contracts being let for Grant Lodge and the Town Hall. Work on Grant Lodge will begin as soon as possible to minimise future degradation of the building which has been empty for around 15 years. Work on the hotel will be dealt with separately following a detailed demand assessment. Although it is expected that each element will in effect be managed as a separate project the governance will still require monitoring at a programme level, which will be controlled by Moray Council.

How will the benefits accrue?

The Heritage Experience, housed in the refurbished and extended Grant Lodge, would provide a focus to direct visitors to the many other attractions throughout the Moray area in addition to being an attraction in its own right. This will boost tourism in the area through both additional visitor numbers and longer stays. It will also give opportunities for smaller businesses to showcase their products.

The renovated Town Hall venue will increase the attractiveness of the area to new recruits and to young people who might be considering moving away from the area.

The hotel will provide the increased capacity and quality required for both tourism and business purposes.

The accumulation of these facilities will increase vibrancy of the town and economic growth across Moray. Future development from inward investors is expected as the vibrancy of the Cultural Quarter increases.

Is it financially sustainable?

The financial case focusses on the two elements of the project to be funded from the public purse (Grant Lodge and the Town Hall). The financial projections are based on operational models identified through research and discussion, and demonstrate that both venues can quickly become operationally viable. Extensive engagement with larger businesses in the area has identified significant support for the proposal and interest in financial / operational involvement.

How does the project fit in the strategic landscape?

The project is in line with growth strategies guidance and will enable the delivery of a number of key regional growth, regeneration and cultural priorities including:

- Industrial strategy (supporting business to start and grow; encourage trade and inward investment; cultivating world – leading sectors; driving growth across the whole country; creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places)
- UK Government Tourism Sector Deal
- Scotland's Economic Strategy
- Moray Economic Strategy
- Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
- The 2015 Elgin Charrette
- Moray Tourism Strategy
- Moray Local Development Plan 2020
- Elgin Town Centre Masterplan (in development)

The project has two clear aims:

1. Increase tourism in Moray by providing a focal point to draw in additional visitors and signpost them to attractions right across the area.
2. To provide an enhanced cultural and evening economy offering which will help to attract and retain young people in the area.

What else is happening in the region?

In terms of competing demand we are aware that as part of the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal there is a proposal to develop Inverness Castle into a tourist attraction, however these proposals are not currently developed and this facility would be around one hour from the Moray proposal in terms of travel time. Regular contact is maintained with the Programme Office at Highland Council to ensure that these developments are complementary.

The Cabrach Trust is currently undertaking a conversion of traditional steading buildings to create a working historic distillery. Again we are aware of the development and have had conversations with the Trust regarding the opportunities for collaboration, and in particular signposting.

What else needs to be done?

The following work has been identified to be completed nearer to any potential project start date and as part of full business case development.

- Flood risk and land contamination surveys to be undertaken for the hotel site.
- Demand assessment for hotel to be revisited, although enquiries from developers and hoteliers would indicate that the market is still there.
- Trust deed for Grant Lodge and surrounding land to be ratified with Court of Session.
- Agree operating models for all facilities.
- Consideration of net zero carbon targets on all building and refurbishment work.

- Road network design studies and landscaping plan.

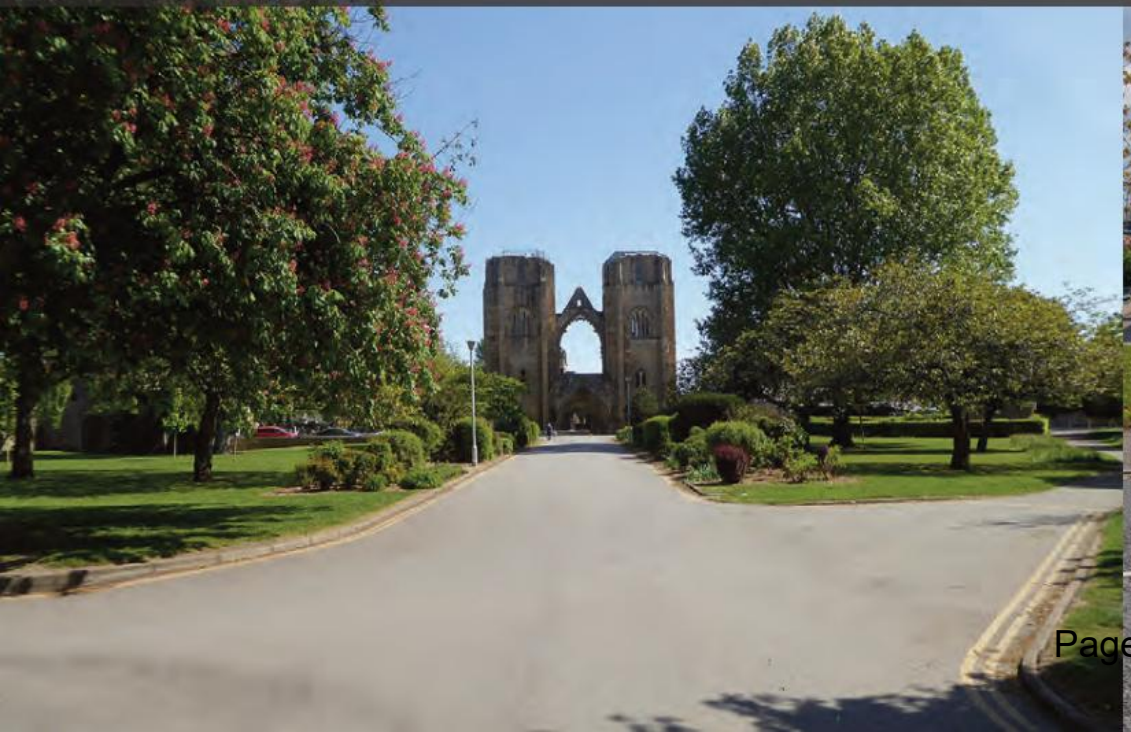
What has been the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Along with the rest of the world the project will be affected by the global coronavirus pandemic, however within the overall Moray Growth Deal programme work is not due to start on this project until April 2024. The full business case will need to revisit financial projections at this point to identify a new baseline for the project but at present the assumption is that by then numbers will have recovered to near pre-Covid levels. An emerging trend over the summer of 2020 has been a marked increase in domestic visitors, with most campsites in Moray reporting being at capacity throughout this period.

Design work for all facilities will take account of issues identified during the Covid-19 outbreak and include contingency arrangements where possible to account for any future pandemics of this nature. For example online facilities will form a significant aspect of the Heritage Experience to enable people to interact virtually if necessary and plan future visits in safety.

Moray
Growth Deal
Innovation from Tradition
MORAY SPEYSIDE HERITAGE EXPERIENCE
STORIES FROM THE SHADOWS

FROM TRADITION



TO INNOVATION

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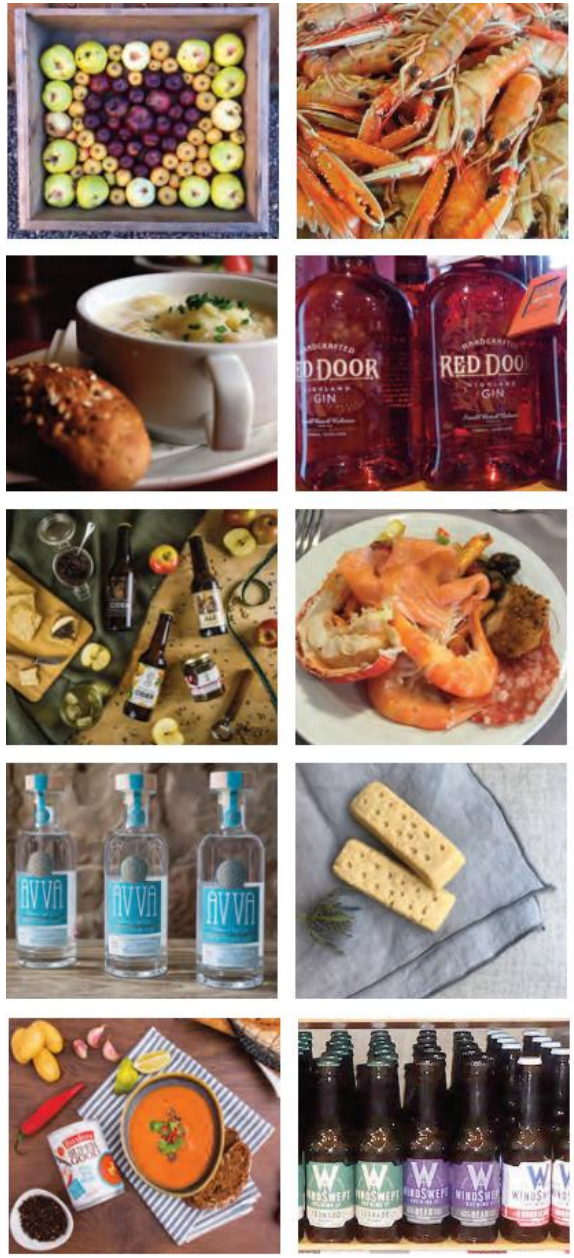
INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Moray Growth Deal, the flagship project of the creation of a Cultural Quarter in Elgin will support economic growth and cultural expansion. Set in a reimagined space at Lossie Green and Cooper Park, a dynamic and vibrant area will be created as a year-round attraction for both tourists and Moray residents.

Major refurbishment of the Town Hall will provide a creative industries hub, including a multi-purpose theatre with performance space. A premium, four/five star 100-plus room hotel will address a much-needed and long-acknowledged market gap in the region's tourism infrastructure. Grant Lodge, anchored at a pivotal point within the cultural corridor which links all development work, will be transformed into a fully-accessible visitor attraction of national significance that will showcase the diversity of Moray's rich heritage.

'Stories from the Shadows' will reveal untold stories, celebrate our local identity and encourage further exploration of Moray. Six authentic and intriguing characters from Moray's ancestry will be introduced, with the Real Macbeth and notorious Wolf of Badenoch taking centre stage. Ancestral tourism is a growing and important market for Scotland with over 50 million people across the globe able to lay claim to Scottish ancestry. The local heritage centre within Elgin Library is a short walk from Grant Lodge and will offer visitors the intriguing opportunity to explore their own ancestry. In addition, the region's most famous product - Speyside single malt whisky - will be celebrated with a stunning Slainte-Mhath coffee/bar and viewing platform.

Grant Lodge is Category B listed and was built in 1766 to designs by architect Robert Adam. Gifted by Sir George Cooper to Elgin in 1903, it was formerly in use as a library and later as a heritage centre. Following a fire in 2003 it has lain empty and has sadly fallen into disrepair. Currently on the Buildings at Risk Register, this investment will breathe new life in to one of Elgin's most iconic buildings.



MORAY FOLK

THAT SHAPED THE FOOD AND DRINK INDUSTRY

Interpretation and displays will be developed and refreshed to include details of people from Moray's past.

HUGH FALCONER
Distinguished geologist, botanist, palaeontologist who was commissioned to investigate the feasibility of growing tea commercially in India, subsequently making tea available to the masses in Britain.

JOSEPH WALKER
Founder of Walkers, internationally-recognised producers of 'Scotland's finest short bread', cakes and oatcakes since 1898.

CHARLES DOIG
Revolutionised the whisky industry in late 19th C with his distinctive design of a pagoda shaped roof, now recognised as a symbol of Scotch whisky distilling throughout the world.

GEORGE BAXTER
In 1868, 25 year-old George Baxter started his own grocery business and with the help of his of wife, Margaret, who made jams and jellies with fruit from the local area, went on to produce some of the UK's finest soups, preserves and condiments.

SIR ALEXANDER GRANT
A biscuit manufacturer who is said to have invented the digestive.

INTERPRETATION

'Stories from the Shadows' will immerse people in the heritage of the region in an engaging, educational and unique way, sparking their imagination, conjuring up scenes from the past, telling untold stories and bringing the heritage to life.

Market intelligence from VisitBritain recognises that culture and heritage is a major draw for overseas visitors and an opportunity to increase visitor numbers and the value of tourism.

Grant Lodge will use state-of-the-art technology and modern interpretive methods to draw visitors into the past through a range of interactive exhibits. Using augmented reality creates a new world of possibilities that can catapult the ordinary into the incredible. The centre will be fully-accessible and inclusive with a lift to all floors. We will work with VisitScotland to ensure we develop an appropriate accessibility guide and staff training.

The development of the centre will include an immersive website, which will allow visitors to plan their visit in advance and create their own bespoke itinerary which focusses on their particular interests, whether food and drink, heritage, ancestry, or a combination of all of these. The itinerary builder will give the visitor information on opening times, prices, travelling times and distances between attractions in order to allow them to maximise the value of their visit and encourage them to stay longer in the area. Staff in the centre can assist visitors to plan, using their local knowledge if required, but the website itself will provide tips for visitors based on choices already made (e.g. if you like this, you may also like).

WELCOME TO THE EXPERIENCE...

ON ARRIVAL

An interactive 3D map of Moray will give an insight into the experience, signposting to heritage sites connected with the six characters, tours and attractions in the area.

The space around the map will be flexible and able to support new exhibits and changing interpretation.

SHOWCASING MORAY'S CHARACTERS

Bringing history to life, the plans provide interpretive material for the six headline characters along with recommendations for initiatives to help attract, engage and retain more visitors.

Interpretation and audience development plans were produced as part of the Discover Moray's Great Places project (part funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, Moray LEADER, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Business Gateway, Moray Speyside Tourism, FACT/Forres in Bloom and Findhorn Bay Arts).

The outcomes were influenced by a total figure of 14,179 community interactions with the project, both online and in person.

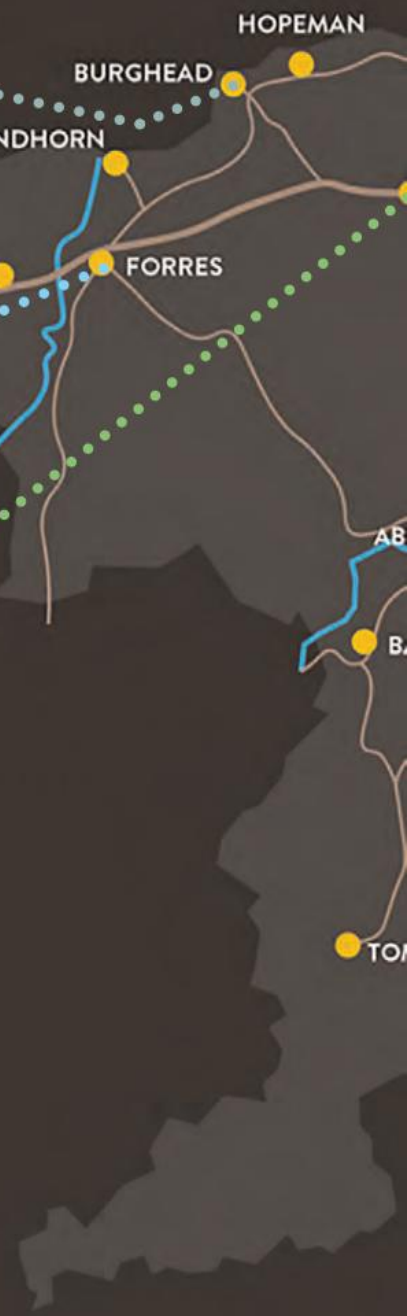
Development of the plans was led by award-winning Interpretation Company Bright White, supported by a team of specialists.

Local people also took part in a photoshoot which captured stunning visual identities for the characters.

The Picts
The Picts or Picti, meaning 'painted people' were by the fourth century AD the predominant people of Northern Scotland. The ancient fort at Burghead is the largest to have been discovered anywhere and so is likely to have been the main power centre.

The Real Macbeth
Shakespeare's tragedy tale of Macbeth is the intertwined story of both fact and fiction that was actually coined from the real Scottish Macbeth himself.

The Wolf of Badenoch
Alexander Stewart (The Wolf) resided with his wife Euphemia, Countess of Ross in Lochindorb Castle, but when his wife proved unable to bear a child Alexander dismissed her to make way for his mistress.

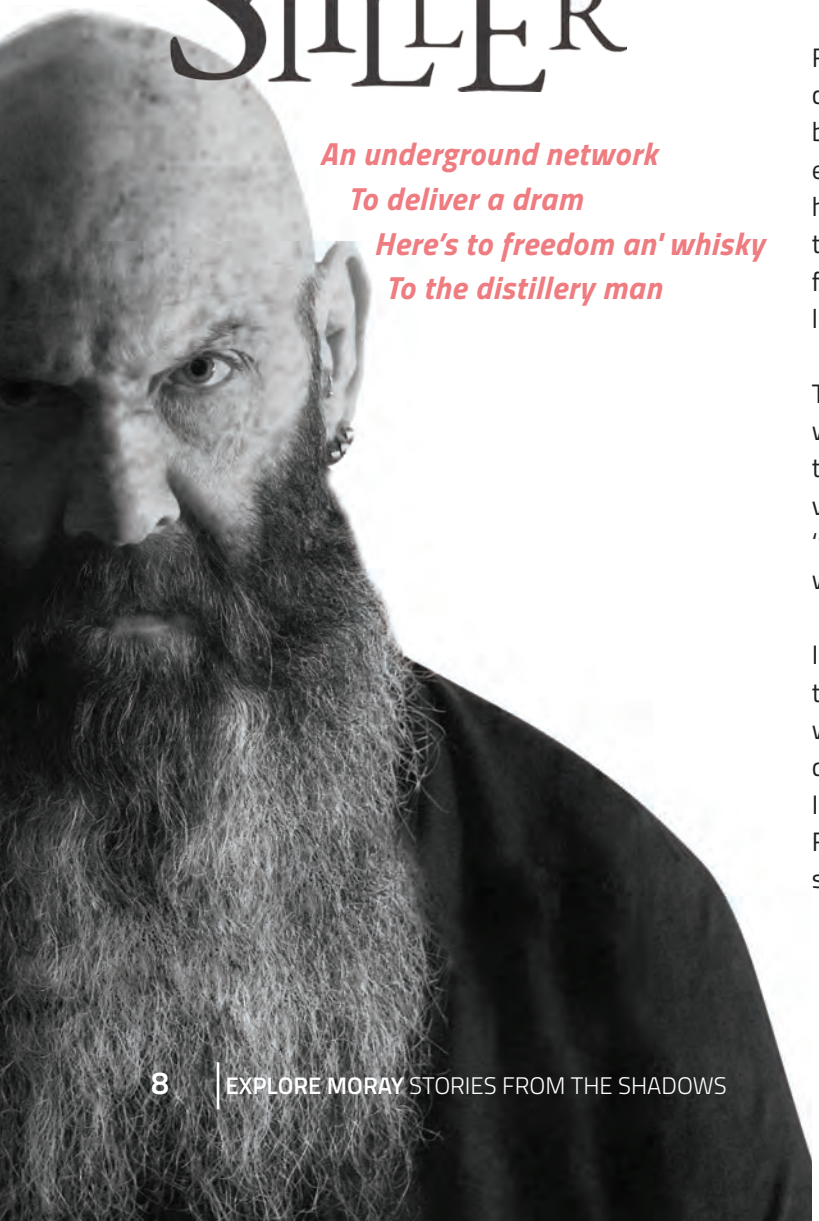


The Rioter
The Rioter stems from a tale dating back to 1847 which encapsulates the notion of tension and discontent within the society of Moray at that time.

Timmer Floaters
In the 1600s timber felled in the ancient inland forests was transported downriver by men known locally as 'timmer floaters'.

Illicit Stiller
Once the hub of Scotland's illicit whisky trade - the hills of Moray disguise a previously complex web of activity. The sites of secret whisky bothies are still being discovered today.

ILLICIT STILLER



An underground network
To deliver a dram
Here's to freedom an' whisky
To the distillery man

The Cabrach was once the heart of Scotland's illicit whisky trade. Its mountainous terrain and remote location made an ideal environment for covert distilling and smuggling.

Following the Scottish Excise Act in 1644 the whole community became on some level involved in the business of distilling and distributing illicit whisky, evading the authorities on a remarkable scale. Many had relied on their own private whisky stills in order to pay rent and so the ongoing trade affected people from all levels of society, benefiting both tenants and landowners.

The distilling process involved malting barley in water and heating it to form a 'mash'. This was transferred to a pot and boiled to release the alcohol vapour, which would then be cooled in the attached 'worm', a metal tubing submerged in cold water, where it would turn to liquid.

It has been suggested that at one time every farm in the parish contained an illegal still, from where the whisky would be smuggled far and wide. Large quantities were transported by land to the ports of Inverness, Cullen, Banff, Portsoy, Rosehearty, Fraserburgh and Aberdeen, where most of it was sold directly to the people of these towns.

In 1707 The Scottish Excise Board was created as a result of the Treaty of Union, the political union of England and Scotland. The Board was responsible for the policing of excisable liquor, an interference which was widely unpopular. Evading the excisemen, or gaugers as they were known, became a matter of honour and principle as much as a source of income.

Over time the community devised and developed inventive techniques to outwit the gaugers. Cupboards beside kitchen fireplaces would conceal stairs leading to the distillery below, meaning smoke could be drawn up through the chimney without attracting suspicion.

Complex alert routines included optical signalling using fire, smoke and flags. Placing white linen on a peat stack was another clear warning that excisemen were in the area. Stories have passed down through the generations about these warning systems. One such tale is of a man who provided accommodation for the gaugers, when they were finally asleep he would ride out on a white horse, a warning that would be visible for miles around against the dark hills.

As the gauger's searches became more frequent and determined, new locations for the stills were sought and the sites of these secret whisky bothies are still being discovered. Beautiful low walls beside the burns, now overgrown with moss and vegetation, serve as relics to a once thriving yet hidden industry.

Certain logistical requirements dictated their locations. A bothy would ideally have a good view of the road, and a ready supply of running water was vital to the process. Production was at its height during the winter months when water from the burns would be plentiful and cool. The excisemen would struggle to navigate the landscape in harsh conditions, whereas the smugglers knew their way instinctively in and out of the Cabrach. The smoke from the bothies was also presumably harder to spot against a cloudy winter sky.

Old droving routes were often used to transport whisky to the coast. In order to meet the high demand smugglers often had to travel unarmed and in the daylight. Women would wear two-gallon 'belly canteens' disguised as pregnancy bumps. Whisky would be hidden in a coffin or hearse to be transported by a fake funeral procession, the gaugers removing their hats and bowing their heads as it passed.

There are romantic tales of groups of smugglers who went to make fast money as pirates on the Spanish Main, sending chests full gold and jewels home to the Cabrach.

From 1823 onwards it was possible to be granted a license to distill, this largely dispelled the network of stillers and smugglers that inhabited the lawless landscape of the Cabrach, but whose stubbornness, willpower and ingenuity paved the way for the Speyside brands we know today, lending credence to the claim that the Cabrach is the cradle of single malt whisky.

Excisemen finding an illicit still.
Image courtesy @Collection of Gairloch Museum

Potential Illicit Stiller themes:

- Who was involved?
- Smuggling routes and methods
- The excise men
- Alert routines and signals
- Links to farming / farmers (barley) and the rivers and burns
- Link to the cask makers and repairers
- Links to the interpretation currently at Tomintoul and Glenlivet Discovery Centre and to be developed Cabrach Heritage Centre

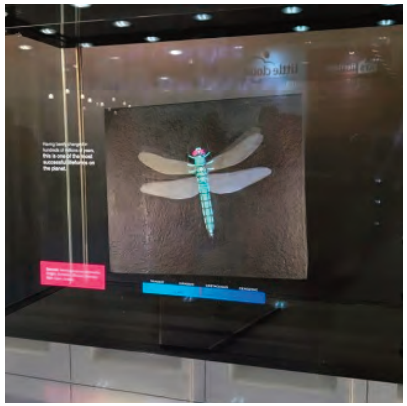
ANCESTRAL TOURISM

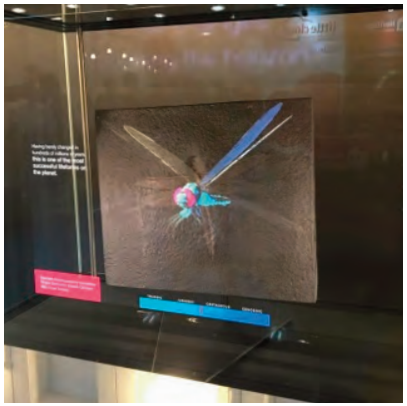
Are you related to the Wolf, Macbeth or the Picts? Do you want to walk in their footsteps?
Visitors will be encouraged to explore their own ancestry by visiting the heritage centre housed within Elgin Library. VisitScotland recognises that the explosion in DNA-based ancestry and high-profile films and TV shows featuring Scotland, such as Outlander, have served to bring Scots ancestry to the fore like never before. An estimated 213,000 trips are made per annum to Scotland by visitors taking part in ancestral research, with a value of £101 million. We will work with VisitScotland to provide ancestral tourism training for staff at the centre so we can deliver an unforgettable experience to ancestral visitors, providing guidance on research points and heritage experiences in Moray.

GALLERY AND EXHIBITION SPACE

A completely flexible space will provide opportunities for special exhibitions to attract different audiences and encourage repeat visits. Creative use of all areas will maximise space and the displays will be regularly refreshed to maintain interest - such as:

Photo credit: Virtual Case System





VIRTUAL DISPLAYS

Imagine being able to see, touch and interact with objects and displays without them actually being there!

The worlds of digital content and real objects have collided to produce a new and innovative display method which allows people to see items and content virtually. Visitors to the experience will have the chance to interact fully, although the displays are really just an optical illusion.

This creative new way of displaying heritage and information allows flexibility and means that content can be updated and changed regularly to keep the experience fresh and exciting.

STEP INTO THE PICTURE

Light projections allow visitors to step back in time and be part of the heritage. 'Step into the picture' gives people the opportunity to be included in an image/scene from the past, giving them a great experience as well as a photo opportunity and keepsake.

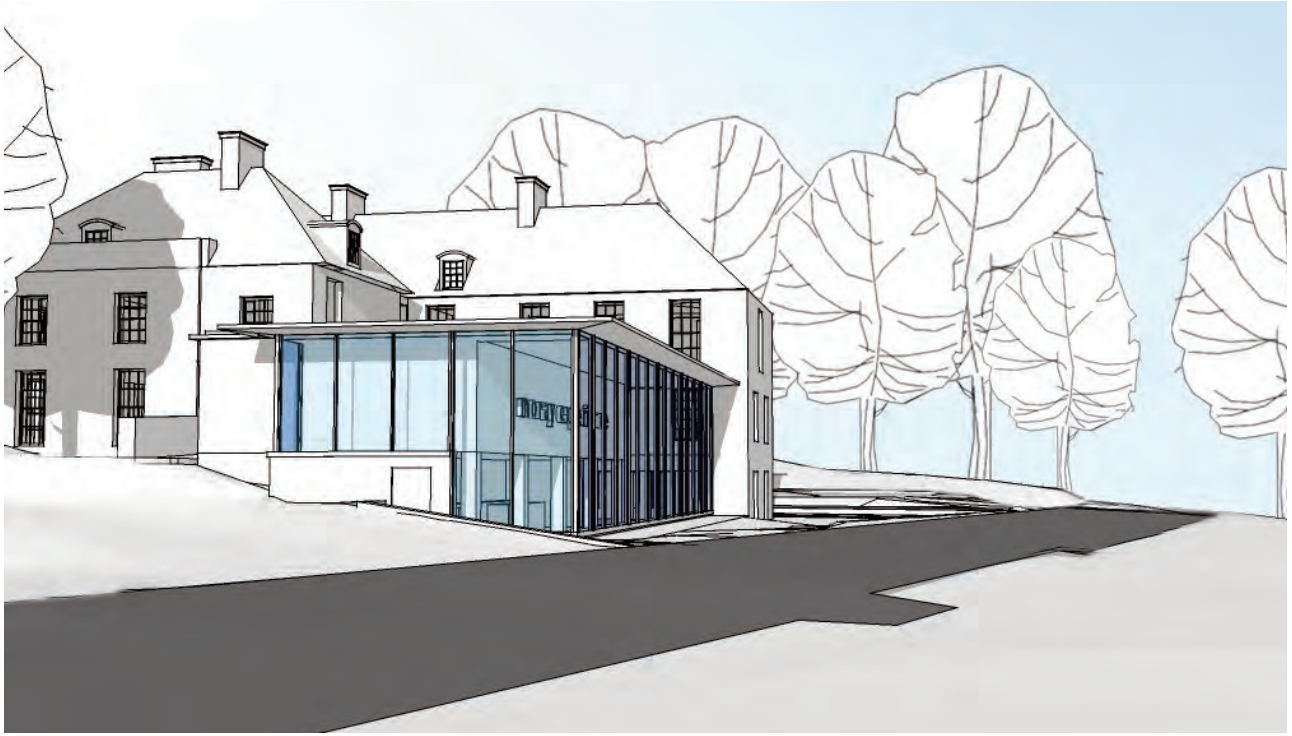
SLAINTE-MHATH COFFEE/BAR & VIEWING PLATFORM

To complement the food and drink experience, working partners can provide a unique tasting experience.

For example visitors can learn about Scotland's national drink from informative and first-hand experienced hosts through a Tour & Tipple Experience (optional). They will guide the visitor through the nosing and tasting of some speciality whiskies, providing an informal introduction to Scotch whisky and in particular the Speyside creations.

This combination of learning about whisky production, cask selection and whisky maturation and discovering the tastes, traditions and stories surrounding production, will culminate with the opportunity to enjoy a dram on the viewing platform, taking in the landscape of Cooper Park and beyond.

Opportunities to showcase and experience the growing gin and beer products from Moray, together with our high quality food offer, will demonstrate the innovation from tradition that underpins the Moray Growth Deal.



THE CONNOISSEUR EXPERIENCE

A premium tasting experience for the ultimate connoisseur – visitors will be offered an opportunity to explore the rich heritage of Moray's iconic brand and discover why whisky has had such a strong presence since the 16-1700s, and how Moray's food and drink offer has developed as a result of this.

WHISKY, GIN AND BEER FOOD PAIRING

For centuries wine has been paired with food to bring out the best taste experience. This type of pairing activity is now a growing trend within the whisky and brewing industries.

Organising a tasting dinner/experience can provide the customer with an alternative to food and wine pairing, for example tapas, to give the customer a bite-size experience.

The experience would be further enhanced by an aficionado, who can give a short introduction/add a bit of a story to each of the dishes, and who can explain why they are being served with the selected whiskies, gin or beer. There will be opportunities for Moray Speyside producers to showcase their products and visitor centres.

THE PREMIUM FOOD & DRINK PROJECTED VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN MORAY SPEYSIDE

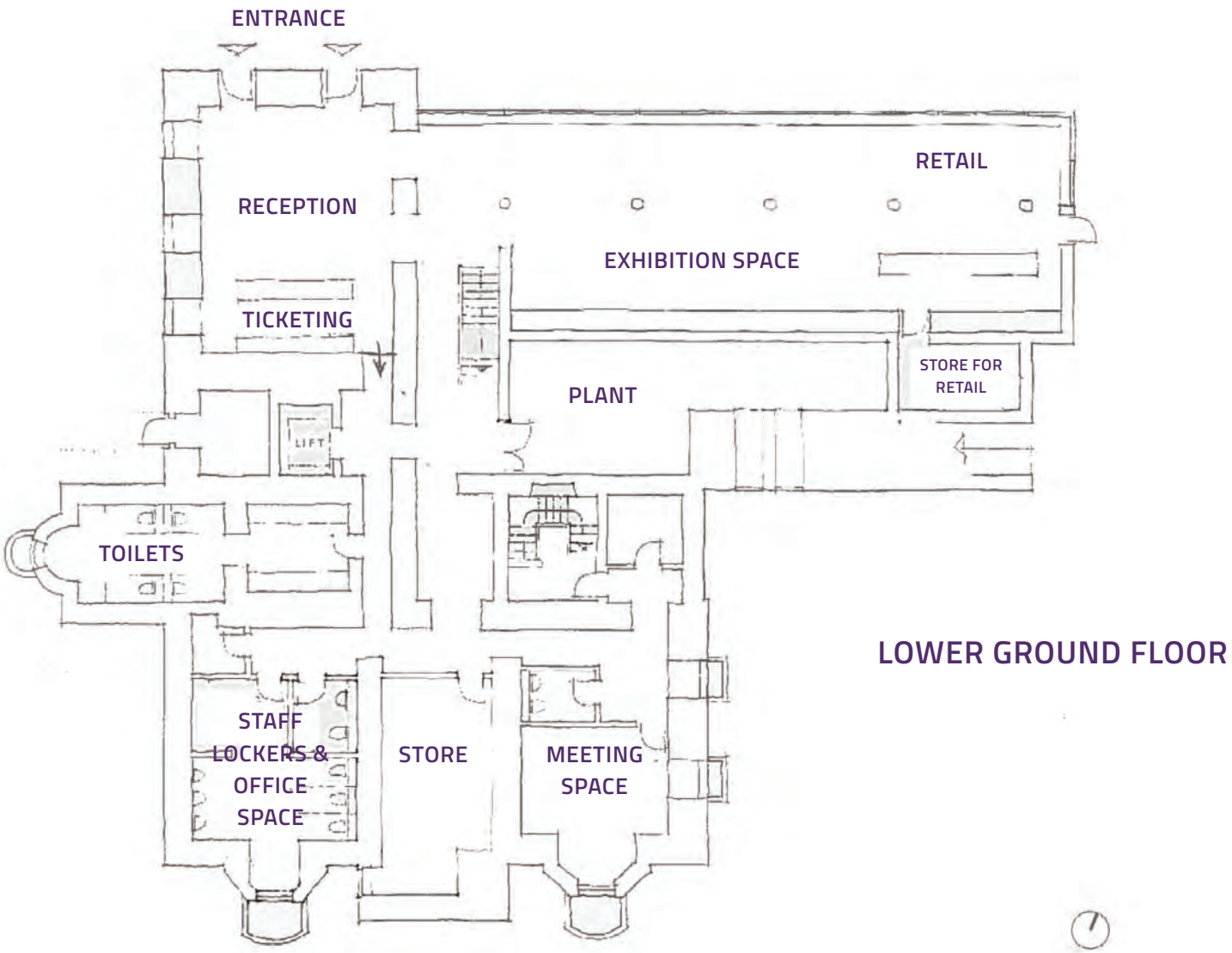
Distilleries open to public or available for tours

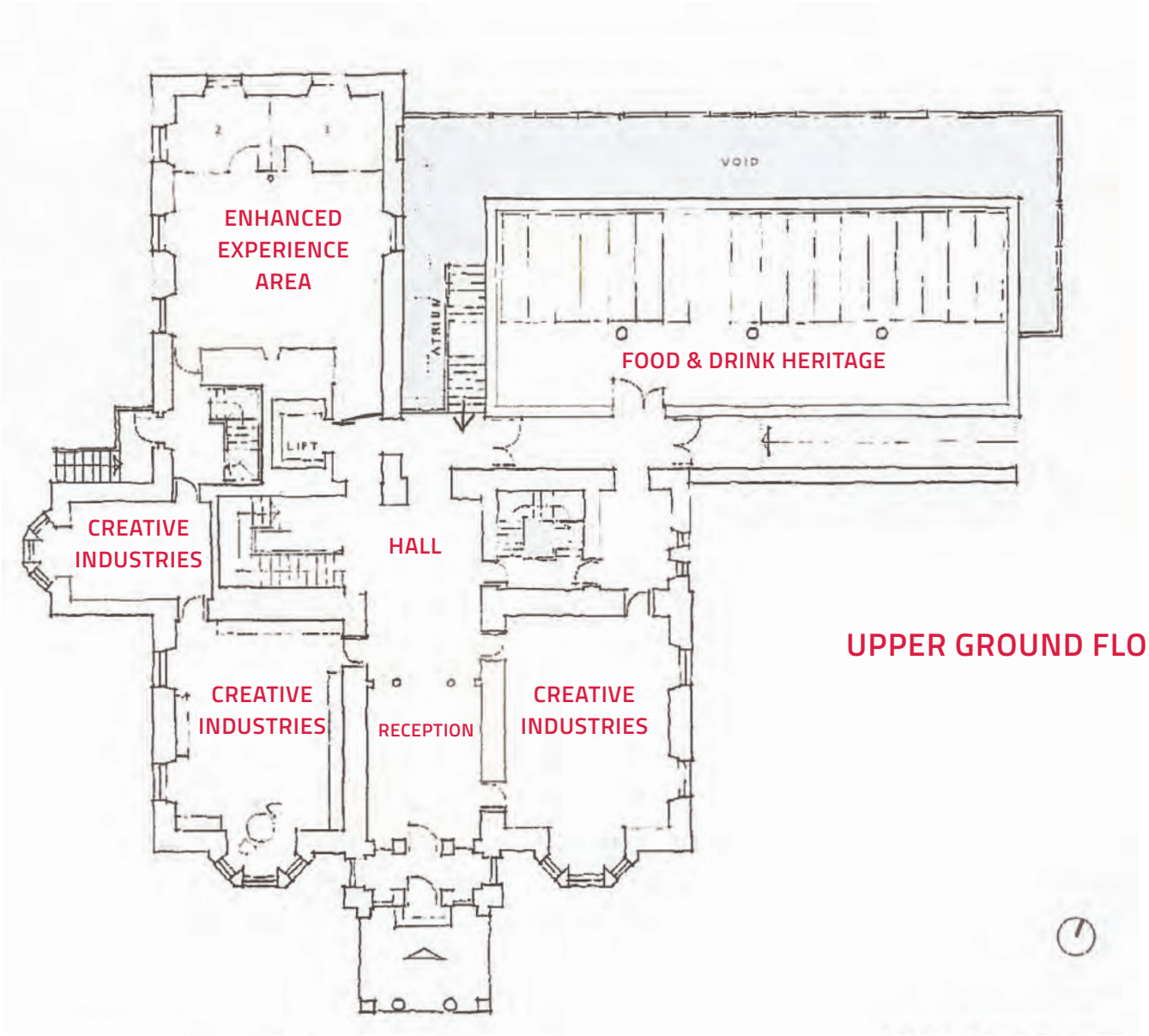
1 Aberlour Distillery Tours Available
2 Ballindalloch Tours Available on request
3 Balvenie Tours Available Monday to Friday
4 Benromach Tours Available
5 BenRiach Tours Available on request
6 Cardhu Tours Available
7 Cragganmore Tours Available
8 Dallas Dhu Tours Available
9 Glenfarclas Tours Available
10 Glenfiddich Tours Available
11 Glen Moray Tours Available
12 Glen Grant Tours Available
13 Macallan Tours Available
14 Strathisla Tours Available
15 The Glenlivet Tours Available April to October

All within 1 hour of Elgin

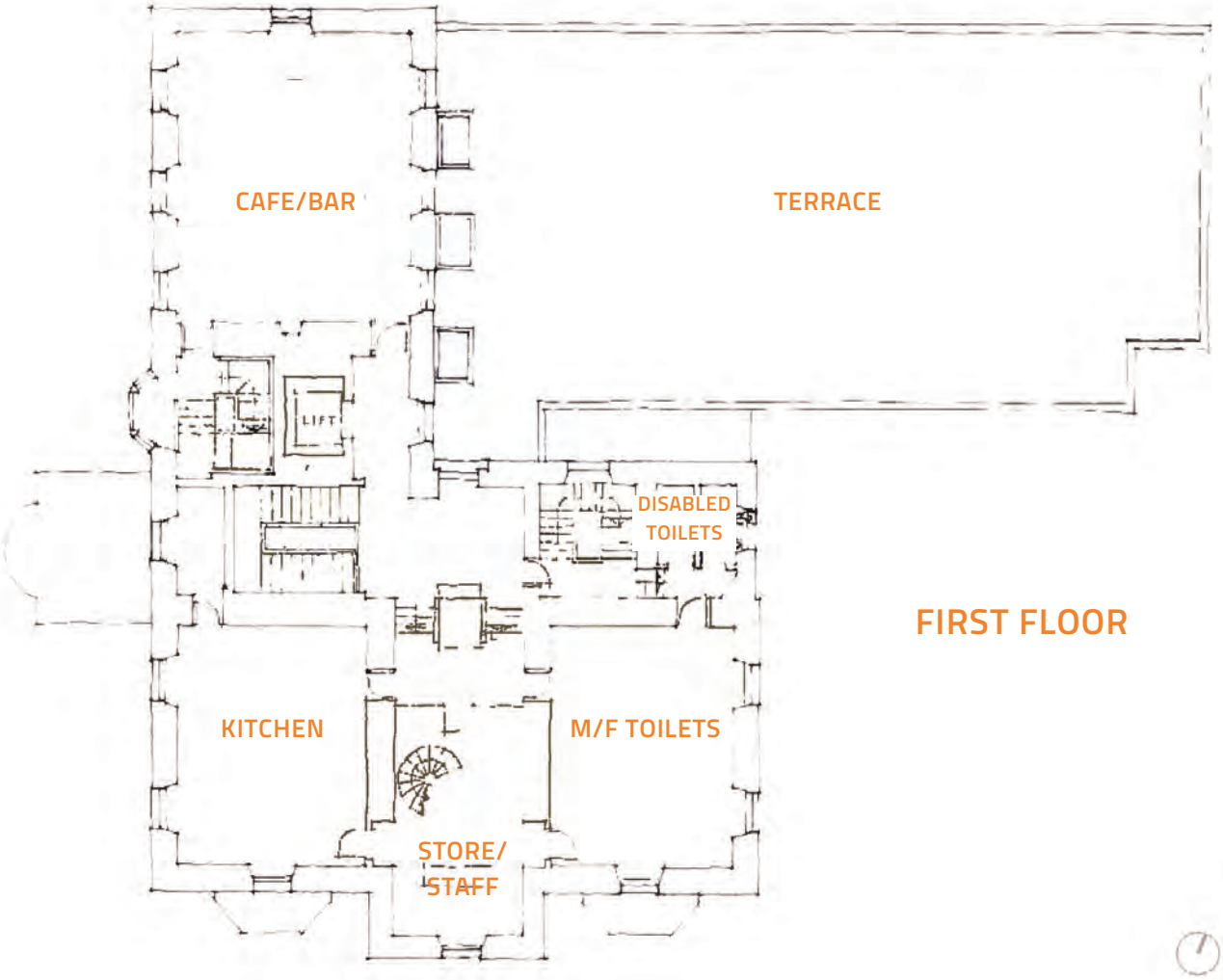
Stagecoach operates service 36 which serves many of the distilleries above

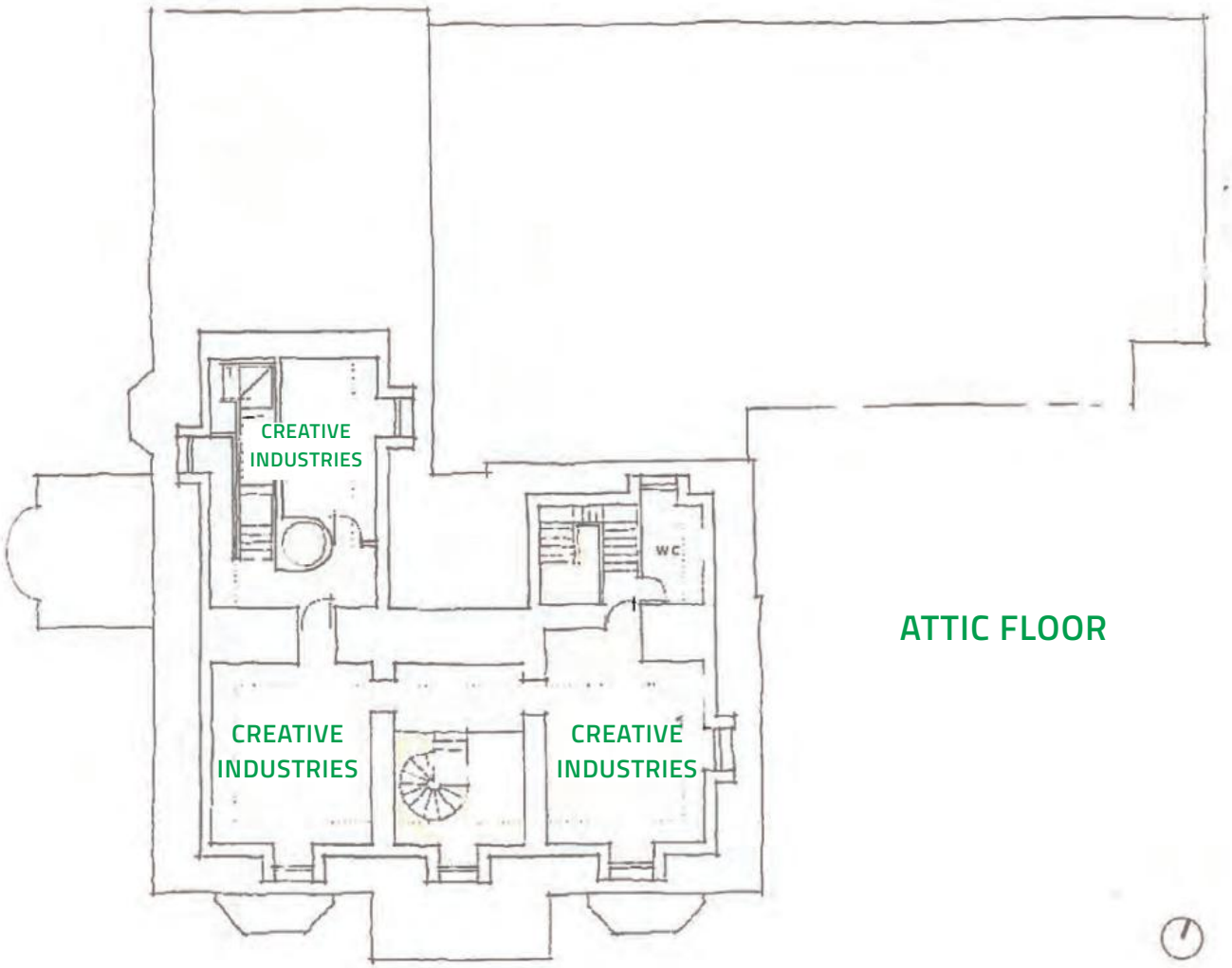
GRANT LODGE FLOOR LEVELS





UPPER GROUND FLOOR


CAFE/BAR
TERRACE
LIFT
DISABLED
TOILETS
FIRST FLOOR
KITCHEN
M/F TOILETS
STORE/
STAFF


CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
WC
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

ATTIC FLOOR

SIGNPOSTING TO MORAY VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

CASTLES, HISTORIC HOMES & ATTRACTIONS

Ballindalloch Castle, Ballindalloch, Banffshire

Brodie Castle, National Trust for Scotland

Burghead Pictish Fort, Burghead

Balvenie Castle, Historic Scotland, Dufftown

Elgin Cathedral, Historic Scotland

Spynie Palace, Historic Scotland

Drumin Castle, Glenlivet

BREWERIES

Windswept Brewing Company Lossiemouth

WooHa Brewing Company, Kinloss

Spey Valley Brewery, Keith

Keith Brewery Ltd, Keith

GARDENS, PARKS AND PLAY AREAS

Gordon Castle Walled Garden, Gordon Castle, Fochabers

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Brodie Countryfare, Brodie

Johnstons of Elgin, Elgin, Moray

Baxters Highland Village, Fochabers

Culbin Forest
about 1.5 miles west of Forres

Roseisle Forest, near Forres

Moray Motor Museum, Elgin

Mither Tongue, Keith

WILDLIFE, NATURE AND NATURAL ATTRACTIONS

WDC Scottish Dolphin Centre, Spey Bay

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Moray Monster Trails, Fochabers

Glenlivet Mountain Bike Trails, Nr Tomintoul

PHOTO CREDITS:
Thank you to : Baxters of Speyside, Walkers Shortbread Ltd, Gordon Castle, Virgin Experiences, Associated Seafoods Buckie, Windswept Brewery, Gordon MacPhail, Avva Scottish Gin and Lindsay Robertson Photography, Brodie Countryfare, Scottish Dolphin Centre, Forsyths, Elgin BID, Moray Heritage Centre, Moray Council, 8 Lands Organic Spirits, LDN Architects, Visit Scotland/North East 250/Damian Shields.

Moray
Growth Deal

Innovation from Tradition

Designed by Strategic Planning and Development © Moray Council 2020

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NB PLANNING ARCHITECTURE

Moray Cultural Quarter:

Redevelopment of Elgin Town Hall

Initial concept report

AUGUST 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In conducting the process of preparing this report, the valuable and informative contributions of the following people and organisations are duly recognised: Gary Templeton and Jim Grant of Moray Council Environment Services; Mike Devenney (Chairman) Angus Lawson and Donnie Squair (Directors) of Elgin Town Hall for the Community Group; Garry Rendall, and Stacey Toner of Moray College Business and Leisure and Creative and Cultural Industries; and George Findlater, Head of Partnerships and Projects, and Simon Montgomery, Area Inspector, of Historic Environment Scotland.

Report by Dr Nick Brown, with assistance from Tony Pinner, Chrissie Innes, Matt Benians and Fay Stables

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report summarises work done in summer 2020 to scope out the potential for Elgin Town Hall to be transformed into a creative hub, as part of the Moray Growth Deal vision to establish a Cultural Quarter in central Elgin serving all of Moray.

The report identifies the aims, objectives and spatial requirements of a new creative hub and, following analysis of the existing building and site, as well as consultation with key stakeholders, outlines some initial ideas and recommendations for taking this ambitious project forward.

The report has been commissioned by the Moray Council on behalf of the Moray Growth Deal Elgin Town Hall Steering Group.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Moray Growth Deal is a regional programme to boost economic growth by bringing together Scottish and UK Governments, The Moray Council, partners from the public and third sectors, plus private business. The overall vision for Moray's growth is based on the notion of 'innovation from tradition'. The general area between the present Community Centre and the Cathedral is believed to be such an area of growth potential. The Town Hall is seen as being apt as the focus of a Cultural Quarter as a key part of the emerging masterplan for the City Centre, with connectivity between the core retail area, Cooper Park and Lossie Green a key issue, aspiring to change the pedestrian/vehicle hierarchy in the longer term.

Recent initial investigations by a Conservation Architect (NBPA, 2019) and a Landscape Architect (MBLA Design Ltd. 2019) have indicated that the Hall and its environs could be extended and/or added to in order to create a sensitive and exciting new purpose(s), and change the road network at Trinity Place to allow a new hard landscaped area to the north of the Town Hall, with options to explore extending and reconfiguring the entrance. These suggestions have been generally endorsed by the Moray Growth Deal Cultural Quarter Board and the Town Hall Steering Group.

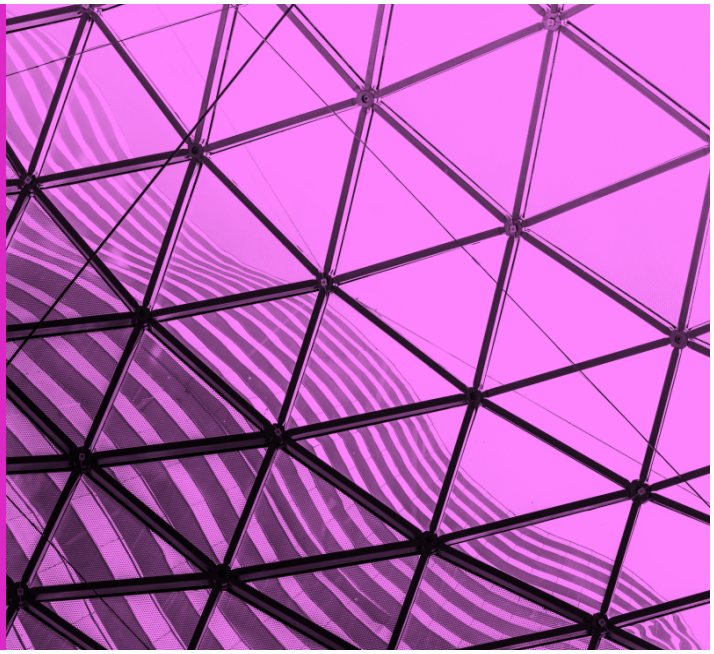
The approach to upgrade and transform the Listed Town Hall has also been well received by Historic Environment Scotland, and SSE has initially indicated that their sub-station and underground cabling should not be seen as a 'showstopper' for any such proposal involving an extension on the south side.

The Elgin Town Hall (ETH) Steering Group, who have since been to The Nerve Centre in Derry to view a project of similar nature, now wish to take the Elgin Town Hall project to its next stage, and have commissioned NB Planning and Architecture (NBPA) from Cullen to investigate further.

Visualisation prepared to convey a remodelled entrance plaza to Elgin Town Hall.
Image courtesy of MBLA Design Ltd

3.0 AIM

The main aim of the commission is "to advance the Town Hall redevelopment process by investigating what is (i) needed and (ii) possible, to transform it into a creative hub at the heart of a new Cultural Quarter".



4.0 DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The key design objectives of the commission are as follows:

- Provide for a 'performance theatre' as a functional focus to the hub
- Transform with appropriate addition(s), if required, to serve creative industries
- Provide high quality food and drink related spaces and facilities
- Identify any creative functions better sited elsewhere in town centre.

5.0 SPACE REQUIREMENTS

The additional space requirements, which have been discussed by stakeholders for the Town Hall during 2019-20, are identified by the Cultural Quarter Board as :

Performance and rehearsal space for local performing arts activity

3 small rooms for **musical rehearsal, digital animation** , each roughly 3m x 3m soundproofed

Staff room(s), toilets etc associated with the above

Space to accommodate **film-making students** (likely a classroom-type facility and studio)

Light and inspiring **gallery space(s)**

Café/restaurant and lounge bar break-out spaces to support these uses

'Fablab' type facility; roughly standard classroom size, with office/ workspace for technician

Small **cinema**, with a capacity for c.40 people, which can double as a **lecture theatre**

Potential for new, more **attractive entrances** to be created to the front and rear of the building.

6.0 EXISTING BUILDING AND SITE

Elgin Town Hall was built in 1961 to a design from the Edinburgh office of one of Scotland's foremost 20th century architects, Sir William Kininmonth. His office, which was also working on a Castlehill Housing project in Forres at the time, won a design competition run by Elgin Town Council in 1957 to build a new Town Hall as a replacement following fire damage in 1939.

A pupil of Sir Edwin Lutyens in the late 1920s, William Kininmonth was a rising star in his early years, even building his striking art deco home at the age of 29, and throughout his career he adopted contemporary practices of the time, whilst cleverly fusing knowledge of Scottish vernacular. After forming partnerships with Basil Spence and then Rowand Anderson in the 1930s, Kininmonth led his office from 1946, with William Leslie and Richard Ewing doing most of the detailed design work.

Elgin Town Hall is a building executed in the international style – now a relative rarity in the Moray area – and is described by architectural historian Charles McKean as a "...plain and cubist 1960s pavilion" (p.41). By the mid-20th century, the prime architectural symbol of the international style was the 'open box with mere planes surrounding a volume, which tended towards the hypothetical flexibility of the free plan' (Frampton, p.248).

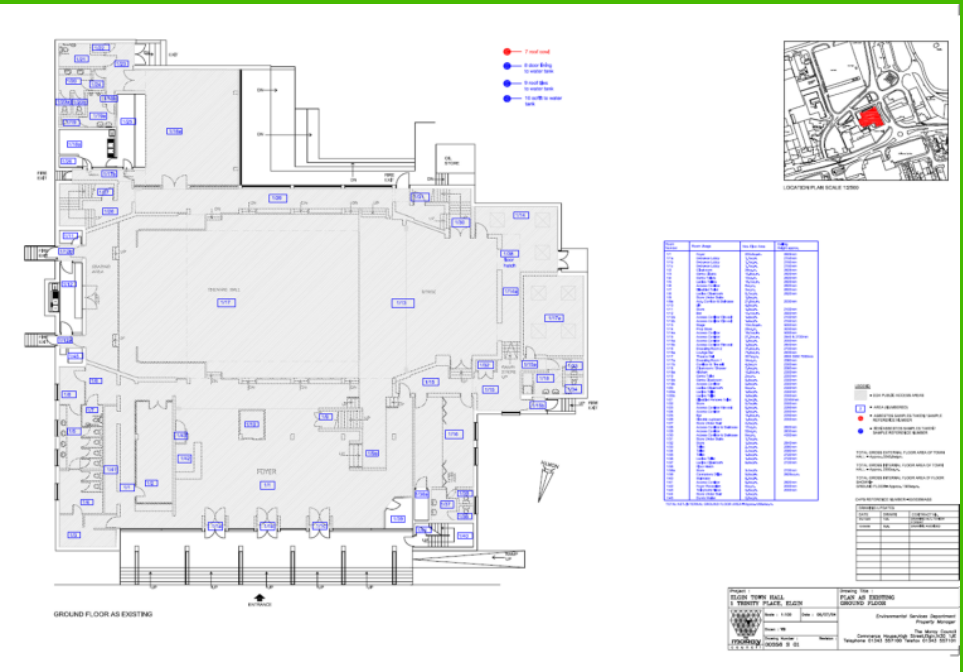
During the 1950s, Kininmonth's contemporaries in Scotland such as Basil Spence, John Keppie and Robert Matthew, influenced by the likes of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, produced notable modernist civic buildings in the international style.

Elgin Town Hall was built as an open box with a grid-iron structural plan that allowed the original designer(s) freedom to pursue a permeable and informal relationship between the main, central hierarchy of spaces, with the more enclosed 'utility' functions either side to the east and west. Whilst this may have represented the zeitgeist of the time, acoustic permeability has since proven to be the building's principal design flaw and has, so far, prevented its long term adaptability towards multi-operational uses.

The key heritage merit of the Town Hall, however, is derived from the **quality of design and finishes** of its Scandinavian-style c.800 seater auditorium and ancillary spaces

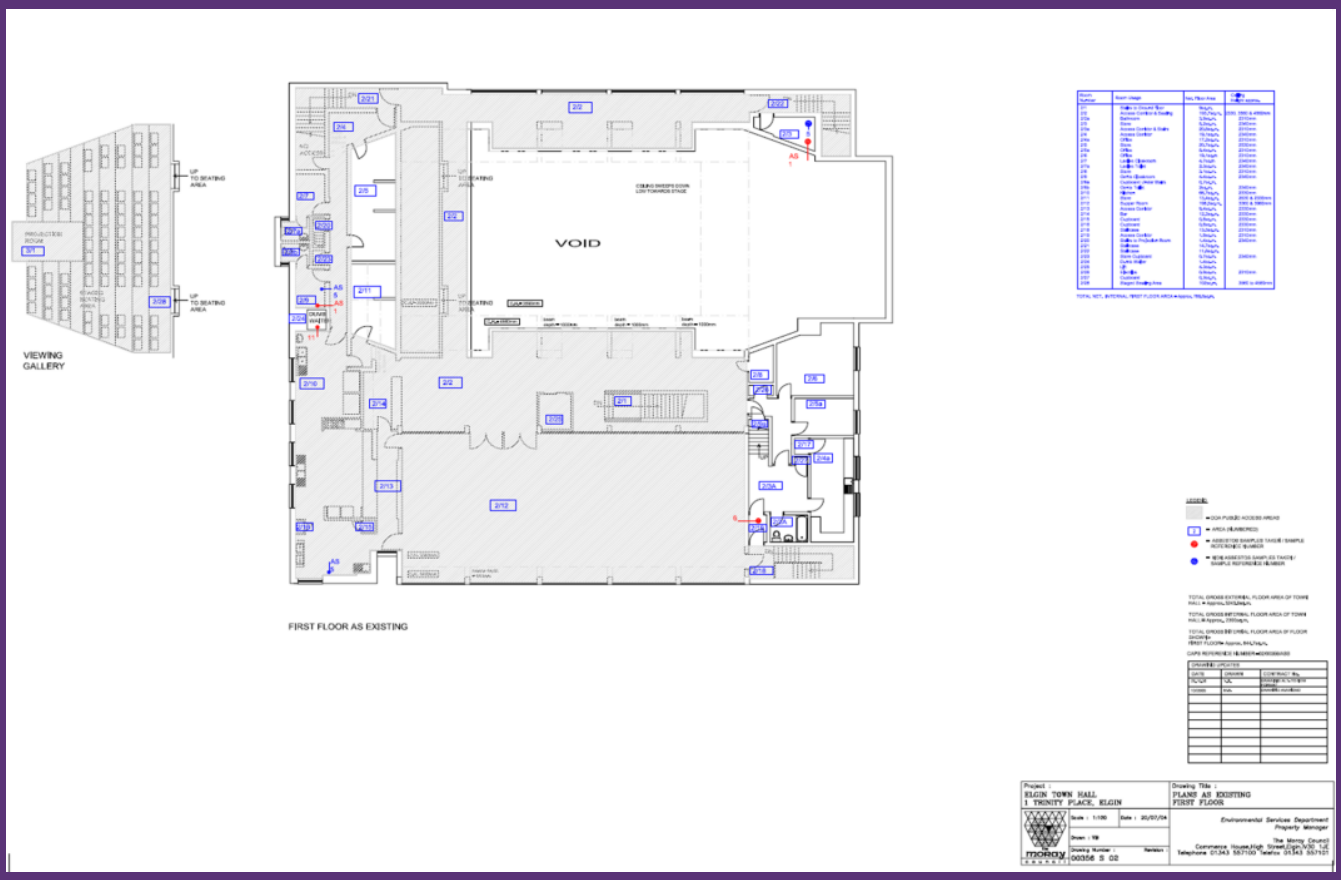
The key heritage merit of the Town Hall, however, is derived from the quality of design and finishes of its Scandinavian-style c.800 seater auditorium and ancillary spaces - perhaps inspired by renowned Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, with his more humanist approach to international style interiors, particularly through the use of wooden finishes.

The building has a stepped entrance front to the north, which is both functional and elegant in design. However, an unintended consequence of the construction of the inner ring road, in the late 1970s, has been to expose the rear of the Town Hall to public view in a particularly prominent manner. Despite this, Elgin Town Hall was listed in 2000 and was managed by the Council until 2018, when it was declared surplus and offered up for Asset Transfer. Its operation was recently taken over by a community group, who took out an initial two-year lease. The building has since become more popular as a local facility, but there is still conflict in the operation of its two main function spaces - these two spaces are served by one entrance/spill-out area with very little sound separation between them.



The existing ground floor plan of the Town Hall highlights (i) the stepped entrance and foyer area; (ii) the main hall space; (iii) the lounge extension; (iv) the stage extension to west; and (v) the utility services along the east wall.

Courtesy of The Moray Council



The existing first floor plan highlights (i) the main hall's upper floor viewing areas; (ii) the spacious supper room above the entrance foyer; and (iii) the utility services on the east and west walls.

Courtesy of The Moray Council

7.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In preparation for tackling the main aim of this commission, engagement took place with representatives of key stakeholder groups. Elgin Town Hall users were represented by 3 of the Community Group Directors. This group pointed out the need to maintain 'multi-functional spaces' throughout the building, in order to sustain the building's interest and long-term commercial viability. The group was also keen to point out the building's current 'hamartia'; which is the inability for anyone to productively use its ancillary spaces when a main event is occurring in the auditorium, mainly due to the lack of acoustic separation.

Moray College was represented by members from the Business and Leisure and Creative and Cultural Industries staff. With its desire to grow creative industries provision across art, drama, writing, film and music, the UHI College highly interested in the prospect of the Town Hall focusing upon the performing arts, but is also very keen for flexible studio/classroom space, as well as café, restaurant, and bar facilities. It is believed that staffing of the 'right people' will be necessary to run the new facilities, but no commitment is yet made.

Moray Council was represented by the Strategic Planning and Development Manager reporting to Cultural Quarter Board colleagues. As well as seeking sustainable and creative use of the Town Hall building, the need for external improvement of the building and wider environment as a visible transformation is sought.

There is a shared vision amongst the stakeholders for the new building to be a 'special, regional centre day and night' that serves Moray, rather than just Elgin. The expectation is for a refurbishment that has a "...bit more wow!" In doing so, it will appeal to people of all kinds far and wide, i.e. the new creative hub will 'attract people to visit, live, learn and create' in Moray.

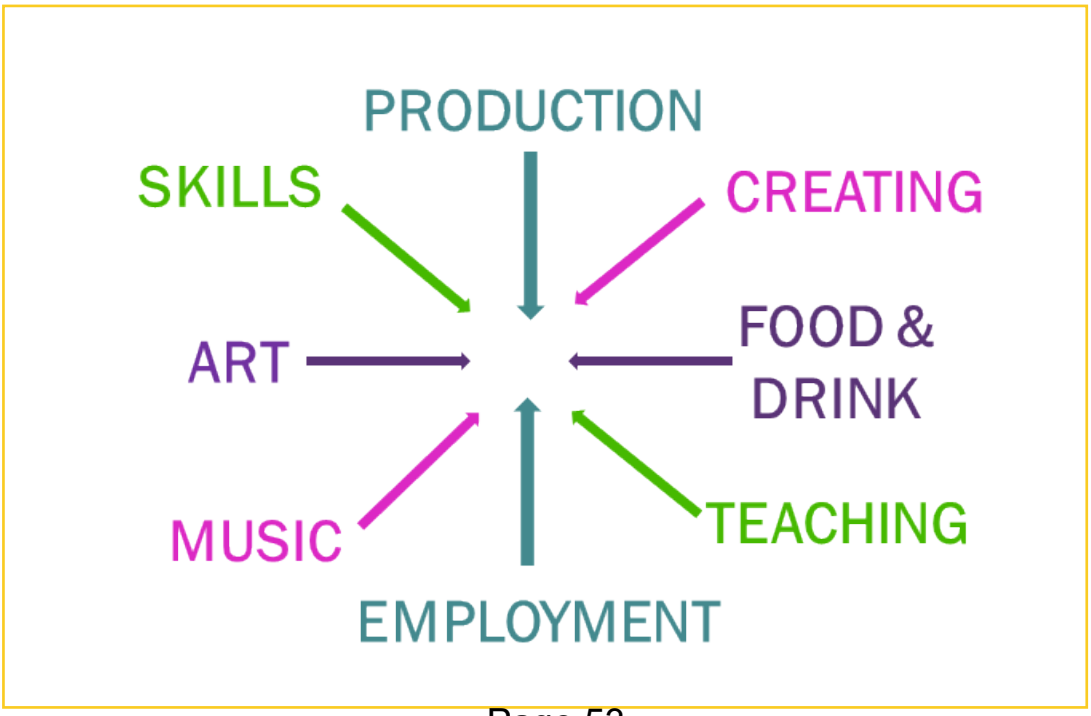
Based upon current work by the Town Hall users, the curriculum of UHI Moray College, and the ambitions of the Cultural Quarter Board, it is perceived that the present Hall/Auditorium be rebranded as first class Performance Theatre, with the ability to attract high quality travelling shows and acts. This may involve adjusting the current stage

to include either a hydraulic stage and/or a fly system.

Based upon the curriculum of Moray College, the ambitions of the Cultural Quarter Board and the lack of facilities and affordable space for practitioners, there is a local need for spaces to provide a new hub in the area for the creative industries sector. This envisages the current site as a multi-art venue for teaching, creating, producing and displaying film, gaming, art, and music.

Based upon the curriculum of Moray College, the ambitions of the Cultural Quarter Board, and the needs and expectations of the general public when visiting cultural quarters elsewhere, the provision for high quality food and drink facilities is also required. This will be particularly important for serving conferences and weddings, which will respectively be important income generation markets for the new centre.

Furthermore, it is the stakeholders group's desire that the site will not only be a hub for cultural activity and bridge the gap between the Moray College and the wider community, but also effectively provide the region with an employability centre for those honing their creative skills and talents.



8.0 EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Initial informal consultation has taken place with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) regarding the Listed status of the building, and with Scottish Southern Electric (SSE) regarding the proximity of their main sub-station and associated cabling.

HES is generally supportive of plans to make a rejuvenated Town Hall part of wider cultural quarter and welcomes development of a business case that uses the high-quality townscape and heritage resources found in Elgin. The listed building consent procedure is there to allow for change, because it is recognised that change will probably be necessary to ensure that its owners or occupiers have a continued interest in using a building and maintaining it.

HES acknowledge design-led intentions for a 'conservation plan' approach, and the Area Inspector has promoted the approach of working within the original spirit or original intentions of the architect. This is particularly appropriate with 20th century buildings where detailing or materials may no longer be fit for purpose and a new approach is necessary, but executed in the same style to be sensitive to the original architecture. The legislation for listed buildings seeks the preservation of listed buildings, their setting and any features they possess. The meaning of preservation, in this context, is the preservation of the key characteristics that led to its listing as a building of special architectural of historic interest.

The expectation is for a refurbishment that has **a "...bit more wow**!" In doing so, it will appeal to people of all kinds far and wide, i.e. the new creative hub will '**attract people to visit, live, learn and create**' in Moray.

The Head of Partnerships and Projects recognises the need to address Town Hall's flaws and alter and add ancillary facilities, and has positively suggested that, "...the Moray Growth Deal represents a significant opportunity to address these and allow for its fine interior to be used and appreciated to the full".

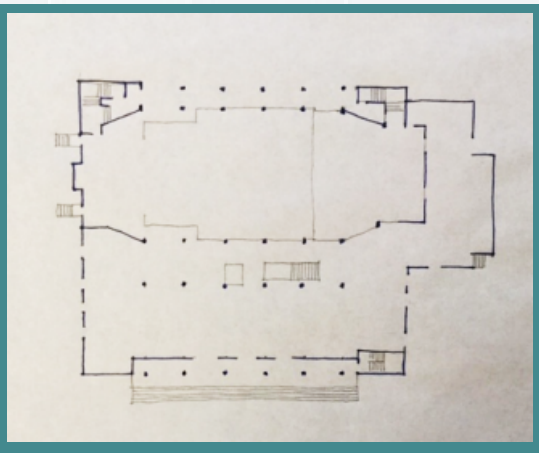
Early consultation has taken place with the Engineering Design section, and then the Wayleave section, of SSE, who own and operate a major electrical sub-station immediately west of the Town Hall. They currently gain access by vehicle across the rear of the Hall. SSE obviously needs continued access to sub-station, but indicate flexibility around this. There is also significant cabling below the current access road, but it appears that this can be worked around in consultation with SSE. Consequently, it appears that SSE will seek to be supportive of the Moray Growth Deal project and will aim to co-operate and, so far as possible, to enable it to proceed.

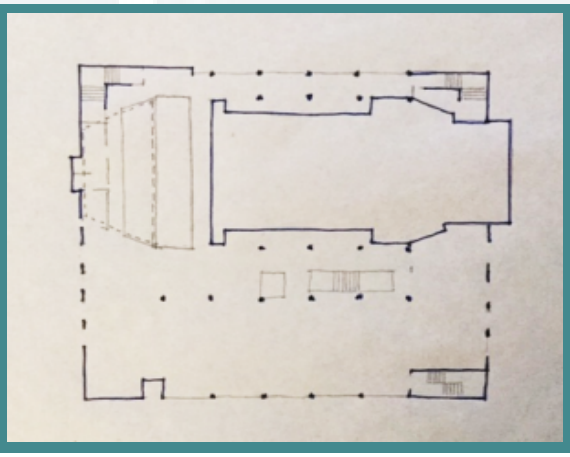
9.0 DESIGN ANALYSIS

Out of respect for the original design for the Town Hall, and due to the building's statutory Listed status, it is proposed to take a conservation-led approach by assessing the key characteristics, seeking to understand the architects' original intentions, and by identifying (a) what elements require protection/retention and (b) where the need, and scope, lies for sensitive alteration.

The Town Hall has been designed as a rectangular box with a functional envelope, resulting in distinct north and south elevations; although the rhythmic elegance of south elevation has been slightly clouded by a single storey addition at the east end. The entrance front, however, is the key architectural element, along with the entrance steps and fountain, which all indicate the civic aspirations of the Town Hall and Elgin at the time.

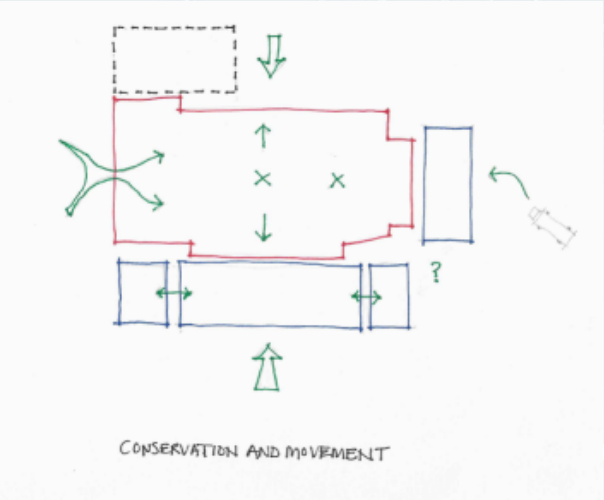
The Hall's central interior is clearly the principal characteristic of special interest, and within this there is a hierarchy of three main spaces with some original detailing and materials surviving. The auditorium is the key space, with the first floor 'supper room' and entrance area as subsidiary spaces. The auditorium is in a very good state of preservation, and remains as a fine example of the influence of Scandinavian architecture on civic design in Scotland in the 1950s and 60s. The interior also seems to have been conceived on the basis of openness, where the windows in the south and north elevations provide light deep into the building. The main architectural spaces flow into each other - but this concept has unfortunately not worked well in practice, with curtains originally hung to keep light out of performances and deaden noise, and ultimately, a glass partition inserted to soundproof the supper room from the auditorium. Applying the modernist mantra of 'form follows function', this flaw in a leading idea needs sensitive and, possibly, radical resolution.



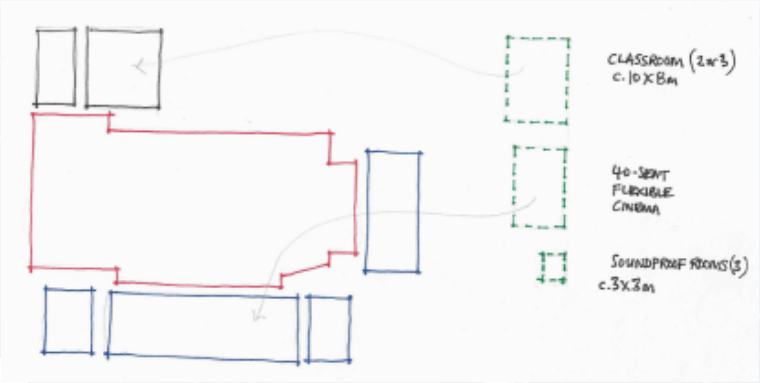


Sketch plans of Ground and First Floor : an initial conservation-led approach identifies the main auditorium, central spaces, and main structure and fire staircases as the building's features for retention (note, the existing single storey is excluded)

Examination of the movement in and out of the building reveals constraints, issues and opportunities. Unlike many other large performance halls and auditoria, principal movement is from the side, rather than from the end, opposite the stage. Due to the building concept, and the proximity to the main road, the option of changing the auditorium main entrance is very limited. However, entrance from the north side provides the building with interest and uniqueness and, due to the building's design, there is an opportunity to repeat this access/egress on the south side too. That said, it is a current flaw in the building's operations that anyone wishing to travel between the north and south side rooms has to pass through the auditorium, which would not be possible when a performance or function is taking place. A future refurbishment of the building would provide the opportunity to rectify this flaw.



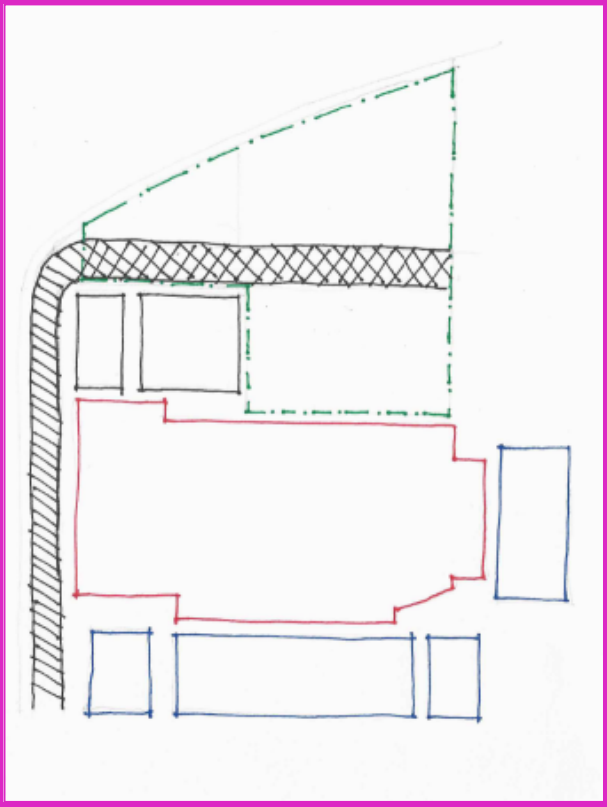
Sketch diagram of movement inside and out. The main entrance is from the north, with further opportunity to the south, and limited opportunity to the east. The west side functions as the service zone.



Sketch diagram of the size of new rooms desired relative to the existing building. Some new room functions could be sited within the existing building's spaces but, without intruding upon the main auditorium, the number and scale of the new accommodation required implies that some additions to the existing building will be necessary

The number and scale of new spaces required within the building is outlined above (see item 5.0). Initial examination of these indicates that some could, at least in spatial terms, be incorporated into the existing building, e.g. into the supper room and/or rear meeting room. However, not all can be accommodated without compromising the building's main spaces, including the auditorium.

In relation to the potential to extend the building, there are significant constraints all round. To the north, the land is associated with the building's designed entrance and there are, rightly, intentions to enhance this area by reclaiming a vehicular route for pedestrians and subsequent plaza landscaping. To the west is the building's disabled parking and servicing area. To the east is the main Elgin to Lossiemouth road, including a bus lay-by, with a further slip road in between. To the south is a tarred road giving access to an electrical sub-station (see Item 8.0 consultation with SSE) and, beyond that, is the trunk road (which may, however, be de -trunked in future years, should A96-dualling improvements proceed, as planned).

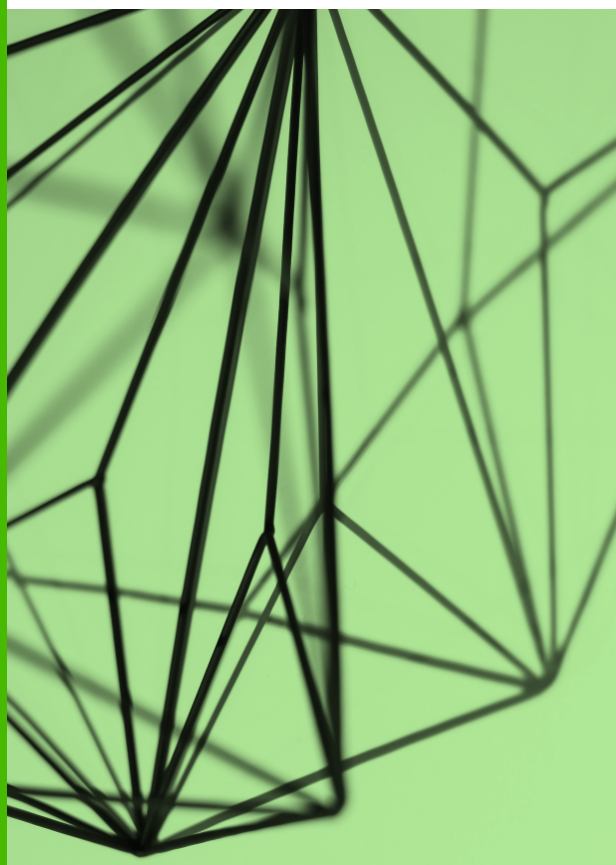


Sketch diagram showing the land to the south where opportunity may lie for extending the existing building, shown in dotted green. This land is presently 'severed' by the sub-station access road which may, or may not, prove to be a major constraint to the project's ambitions

10. INITIAL PROPOSALS

Taking on board all of the above, the initial proposals have been developed only to their earliest stage of outline design, but they are shown in sufficient detail to allow spatial interpretation of the design intentions and, more importantly, permit dialogue amongst the relevant parties to enable the project to advance to its next stages.

The overall design approach taken is to conserve, enhance and alter the building in a way that is both radical and sensitive. For example: acoustically separating the auditorium, yet still striving to preserve its feeling of openness and permeability with semi-glazed partitioning; and extending this atmospheric concept through into a major extension to the south in the form of a street atrium, whilst still retaining the civic presence of the building. Constraints are viewed as opportunities. For example : the open aspect side entrance to the auditorium from the north can be 'replicated' on the south side to maintain a form of symmetry and focus upon the central auditorium, as well as provide a new, secondary entrance point that links the new building to the town centre; furthermore, the diagonal visibility splay of Alexandra Road provides the opportunity to form a new architectural line that accentuates a

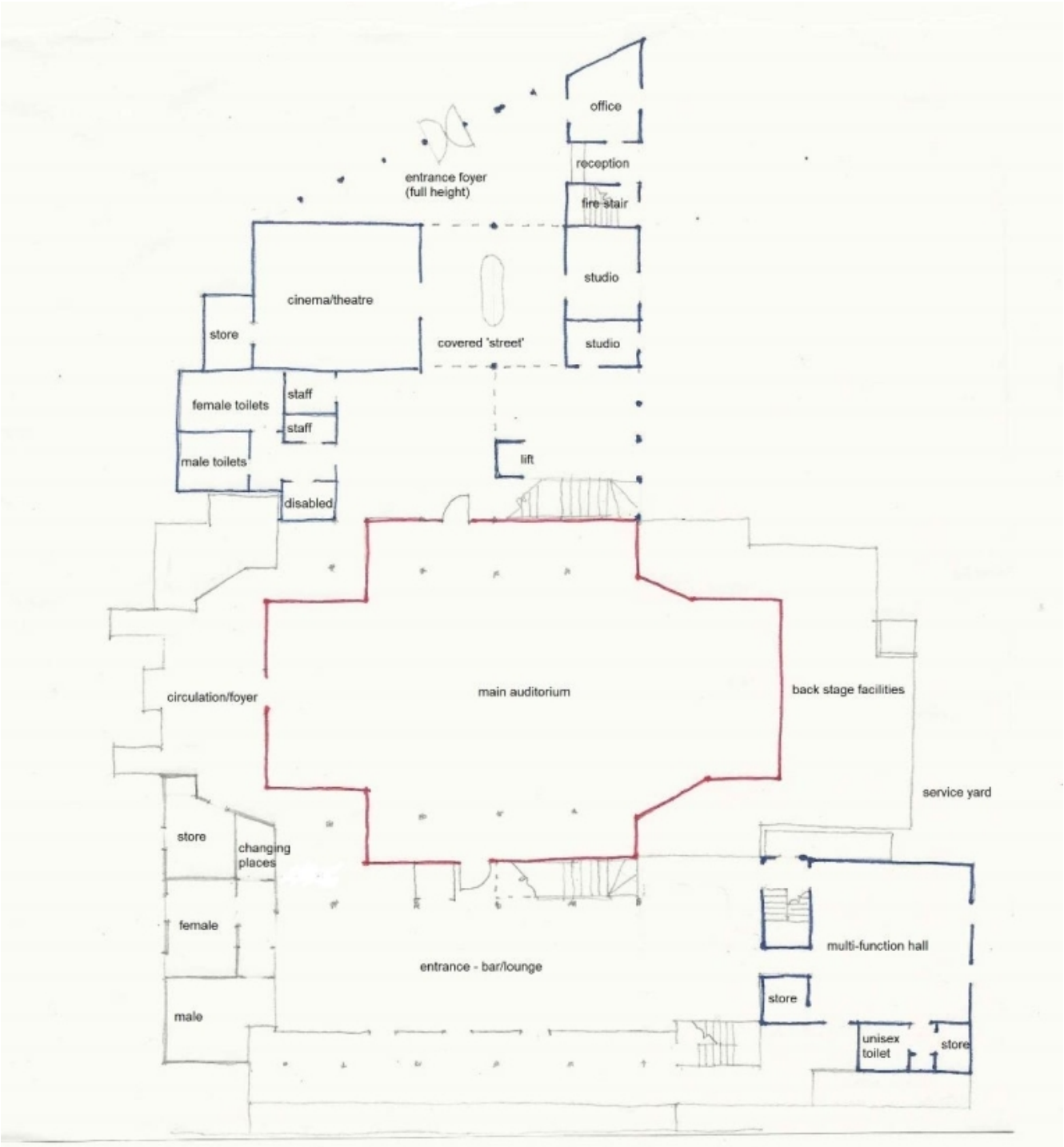


The overall design approach taken is to **conserve, enhance and alter** the building in a way that is **both radical and sensitive**.

contemporary 'slice' across the grid-iron layout of the original building.

The design approach to the individual rooms throughout the new building is focused upon flexibility, adaptability, versatility, and multi-use e.g. cinema room as shared use space and not fixed or set for only one function; and classrooms that can reduce/increase in size to suit circumstances. The flexible solution for gallery space – e.g. in non-specific rooms and/or throughout the open circulation spaces - responds to need and demand for community and contemporary art, rather than commercial art, i.e. the new building will not be bespoke enough to host a national gallery exhibition.

Inspiration for space, style and quality can be derived from comparable examples elsewhere, such as Lerwick's Mareel Centre, Dunkeld's Birnam Arts, Aberdeen's Art Gallery, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Derry's Nerve Centre, and Croydon Fairfield Halls.



Sketch of possible new Ground Floor Layout – the main interventions are: new separation partitioning to the north and east sides of the main auditorium; a new subsidiary extension to the north-west of the building to house a multi-purpose community space; a new major extension to the south, with new entrance, to house a cinema and creative industries studios.

Sketch of possible new First Floor Layout – the main interventions are: new separation partitioning to the north and east sides of the main auditorium, with new access point from south side; a new minor extension to the north-west to house a main kitchen facility; a new major extension to the south, with atrium balcony, classroom studios, and ancillary rooms.

In proposing a new extension to the south, there is an assumption that any SSE constraints imposed by SSE and/or Trunk Road safety, can be overcome.

The following visualisations indicate how the south side proposals could look from several angles

ELGIN TOWN HALL

11. TIMELINE

A simplified, indicative timeline for delivering the project quickly is outlined below:

Stage	Comments	Date
Client brief concluded	Incl. consultation process	Autumn 2020
Design Team procurement	Multi-discipline team	Autumn 2020
Development process	Incl. funding package and business case	Winter 2020
Planning Application	Incl. Listed Building Consent	Spring 2021
Building Warrant Application		September 2021
Tender process	Main contractor identified	Spring 2022
Commencement	Possibly in phases, to allow parts of building to remain operational	Autumn 2022
Completion		Autumn 2024

The above timeline assumes that agreement can be reached between all parties, constraints can be overcome, that the business case is strong and the public generally supports the proposals, and that funding to enable the development is forthcoming.

It is noted that the Moray Growth Deal Cultural Quarter Board wants to accelerate the process as much as it can, e.g. aiming to commence on site in 2022.

12. CONCLUSION

This short commission has been tasked to briefly examine the performance of the existing Town Hall, identify desired spaces to see if they can be accommodated within the existing building (ref. 5.0), and explore what the building could become in conceptual terms. The work has not produced a finalised design or style, but has merely sought to foster 'high level' discussions and decisions about the building's possible form, with the detail to be resolved later in the process.

The study indicates that the predicted needs of the users and stakeholders (ref. 7.0) along with their spatial ambitions for a Creative Hub, requires (i) internal separation of the main auditorium and (ii) an extension(s) to the existing Town Hall.

A sensitive, radical refurbishment and alteration of the existing building will give it new lease of life and long-term survival. As a result, it is supported, in principle, by Historic Environment Scotland (ref. 8.0).

Analysis of the existing building and its land available indicates that extension opportunities best lie to the south and north-west of the site (ref. 9.0).

The ambition and requirements of the project Steering Group provide an exciting opportunity to create a more landmark form of architecture to draw attention to a re-oriented and re-imagined building and its entrance (ref. 10.0). This, however, is quite dependent upon any constraints, such as access and cables to the electric sub-station, being sufficiently addressed and/or overcome.

The study concludes that the transformation of Elgin Town Hall to more of a regional Cultural Centre (excluding a commercial gallery) is feasible and will likely bring substantial and wide-ranging benefits to Elgin and the Moray area.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to take the project forward, it is recommended that the Moray Growth Deal Elgin Town Hall Steering Group:

1. Obtain written confirmation from SSE that their underground cabling and access to their sub-station is not a 'showstopper' or major impediment for a southern extension to the Town Hall
2. Conduct specific consultation with Transport Scotland and Transportation Services regarding the influence of the main road network upon the design and project implementation.
3. Extend the local consultation process to involve more users and/or interested parties
4. Critique in more detail the 'backstage facilities', with a view to identifying any issues to resolve through refurbishment
5. Expand the overall design brief, consider early design team procurement, and confirm a project timeframe
6. Consider an outline business case and delivery programme for implementation

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https://www.dca.org.uk/

http://www.edinburgharchitecture.co.uk/william-kininmonth

https://www.fairfield.co.uk/venues/

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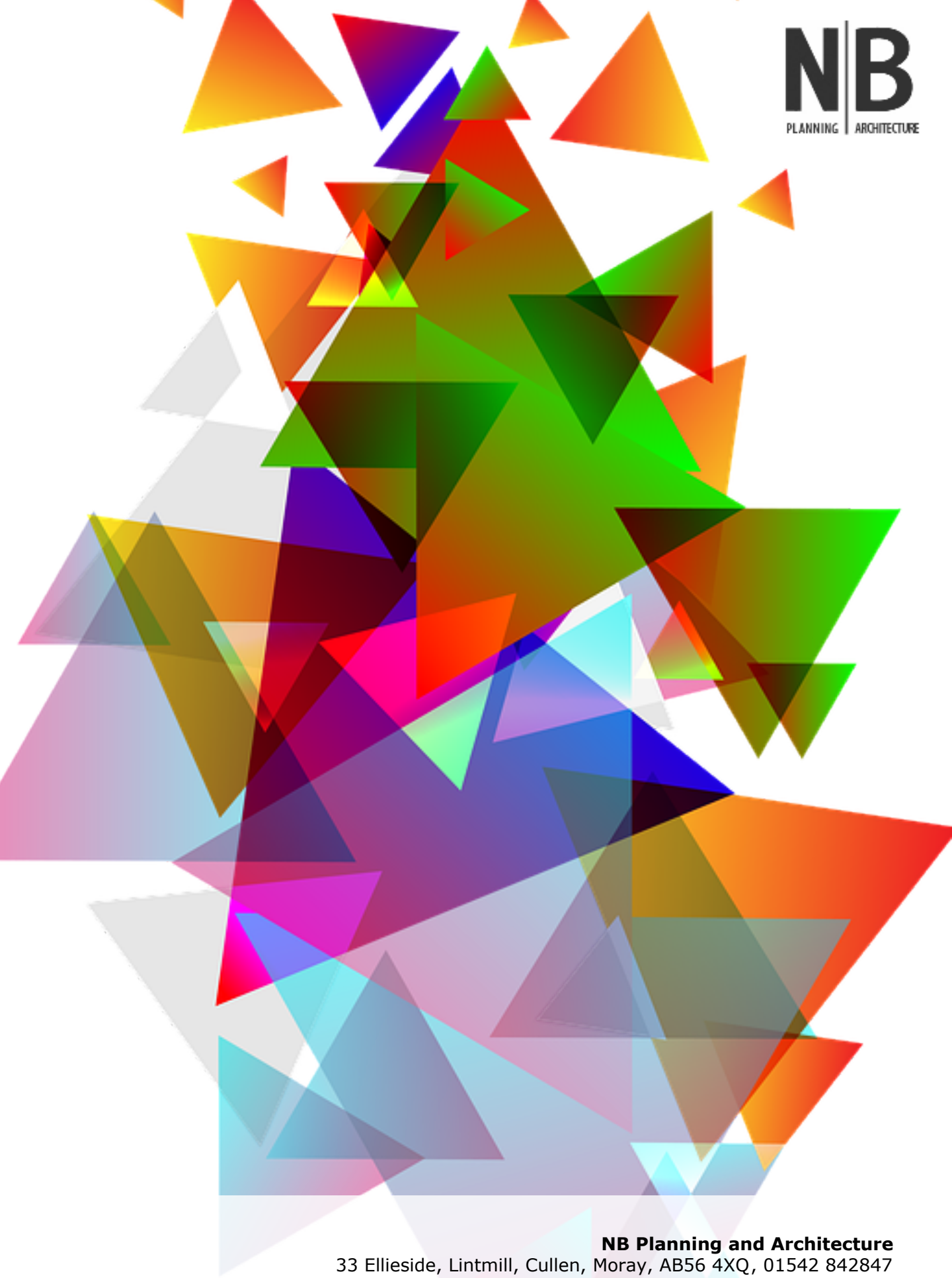

NB Planning and Architecture
33 Ellieside, Lintmill, Cullen, Moray, AB56 4XQ, 01542 842847
nbplanning@aol.com

SECTION 1 - DO I NEED AN EIA?

DO I NEED AN EIA?

Name of policy/activity: Moray Growth Deal – Cultural Quarter Project
Please choose one of the following: Is this a: • ~~New policy/activity?~~ • ~~Existing policy/activity?~~ • ~~Budget proposal/change for this policy/activity?~~ • Pilot programme or project? Y

Decision Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) It has been agreed with the Policy Manager – Equality & Investment in the Cities Team, Scottish Government, that all outline business cases developed as part of the Moray Growth Deal will include an EIA to identify significant impacts on protected groups. It is considered that identifying the positive impacts on these protected groups will also demonstrate success for the projects in the deal and link to some of the key outcomes and objectives stated. **Date of Decision:** 02/12/2019

If undertaking an EIA please continue onto the Section 2. If not, pass this signed form to the Equalities Officer.
Assessment undertaken by *(please complete as appropriate)*

Director or Head of Service	
Lead Officer for developing the policy/activity	D Moreton Moray Growth Deal Programme Manager
Other people involved in the screening (this may be council staff, partners or others i.e contractor or community)	Equal Opportunities Officer

SECTION 2: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Brief description of the affected service

1. Describe what the service does:

The proposal is looking to invest in the creation of a vibrant city Cultural Quarter space at the heart of Elgin that will support economic growth and cultural expansion within the city and wider region. Culture-led regeneration has been an emerging trend amongst many UK cities and towns in recent times, with examples such as Belfast and Dundee leading the way. It has become evident that investment in culture and creativity has the potential of generating socio-economic impacts such as strengthening communities and skills, increasing employment and boosting tourism.

2. Who are your main stakeholders?

Moray Council , Moray Speyside Tourism, Grant Lodge Trust, Friends of Grant Lodge, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Elgin Town Hall for the Community, University of Highlands and Islands, Moray Growth Deal Business Assembly, Scotch Whisky Association, Malt Whisky Trail, Scotch Whisky Experience, 16-29 year olds, Recite Films, Out of Darkness Theatre Co, Findhorn Bay Arts, Elgin Youth Café, Spirit of Speyside, Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere Group, Elgin Fund, Moray Chamber of Commerce, Elgin BID, General Public/Moray Residents.

3. What changes as a result of the proposals? Is the service reduced or removed?

The project has two clear aims:

1. In terms of the visitor economy; the aim is to increase tourism in Moray by providing a focal point of significance to draw in additional visitors and signpost them to attractions right across the area. Particular emphasis has been made within the business case on ensuring that the Cultural Quarter compliments existing offerings throughout the area. Elgin is a central location which is close to all major transport links and provides easy access to all parts of Moray. It is also the most visited by tourists and therefore is ideal for signposting to other attractions throughout Moray. In terms of Whisky in particular, it will complement the visitor offerings already available at distilleries rather than compete because it has a signposting function, and is set apart from the main clusters.
2. The project will provide an enhanced cultural and evening economy offering which will help to attract and retain young people in the area. High quality developments like the Cultural Quarter also increase the attractiveness of the area to those thinking of locating in Moray for employment reasons

4. How will this affect your customers?

The project will provide benefits in terms of:

- Increased attractiveness of the area
- Increased hotel capacity for visitors
- Increased tourism spend in the area
- Increased employment opportunities
- Regeneration of Elgin town centre, increasing the vibrancy of the town
- Improved cultural offerings

5. **Please indicate if these apply to any of the protected characteristics**		
Protected groups	**Positive impact**	**Negative impact/risks**
Race	No impacts have been identified. Moray has a relatively small proportion of minority ethnic groups (4%, compared with 8% nationally)and a relatively high proportion of white (other British(18%, compared with 8% nationally). The proportion of white – other in Moray is 3%, of which 1% is Polish. (source: Scotland's census, https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/ods-visualiser/#view=ethnicityChart&selectedWafers=0&selectedRows=0,12,16,20	
Disability	Enhanced public space and road traffic configuration to ensure easy and safe walking and cycling connections to the town centre	The development/ implementation phase needs to consider accessibility for a range of disabilities, bearing in mind that these can vary considerably depending on the type of disability
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)	Enhanced public space and road traffic configuration to ensure easy and safe walking and cycling connections to the town centre	The development/ implementation phase needs to consider accessibility for a range of disabilities, bearing in mind that these can vary considerably depending on the type of disability
Sex Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)	Enhanced public space and road traffic configuration to ensure easy and safe walking and cycling connections to the town centre	All new or refurbished facilities within the project will include somewhere private for someone who is pregnant or breastfeeding to rest, and to provide a private, hygienic and safe place for breastfeeding, and to store milk if necessary.
Sexual orientation	No impacts have been identified	
Age (include children, young people, midlife and older people)	It is a key objective of the project to attract and retain more young people in Moray.	
Religion, and or belief	No impacts have been identified	
Gender reassignment	✓	Consideration to be given to unisex toilet facilities being installed as standard to remove barriers

Inequalities arising from socio-economic differences	An options appraisal was carried out which combined a cost/ benefit ration with a separate appraisal on socio-economic impacts. This is described in Appendix 2 of the business case. A detailed analysis of the social impacts is given in Appendix 5 of the business case.	
Human Rights	Enhanced cultural opportunities have been demonstrated to give rise to wider freedom of thought, conscience and religion (article 9 of Human Rights Act) freedom of expression (article 10). This is evidenced in the Economic Impact Assessment comparison data with other towns/cities that have already developed cultural quarters. Article 14 of the human rights act (protection from discrimination) is engaged in considering accessibility for various protected groups as well as groups disadvantaged due to rural isolation.	

6. Evidence. What information have you used to make your assessment?

Performance data	Inclusive growth diagnostic
Internal consultation	A programme board meeting was held on 11th May 2017 to determine the CSF's for projects within the Moray Growth Deal. The attendees included relevant stakeholders from Moray Economic Partnership, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, University of the Highlands and Islands, Skills Development Scotland, and Moray Council
Consultation with affected groups	The options were generated by holding a series of workshops with key stakeholders, at which evaluation was undertaken to assess how well each option met the investment objectives and CSFs at each stage. In light of the different stakeholder groups involved the options appraisal workshops were held separately for each element of the Cultural Quarter and are recorded in Appendix 2 of the business case
Local statistics	http://smi.moray.gov.uk/MPG/PRO1/16-0008/01%20Project%20Information/20170809AmendedMorayDiagnostic4.0.xlsx
National statistics	
Other	Treasury Green Book and capital investment manual. Consultants (Ekosgen (Appendix 4), BiGGAR Economic (Appendix 6))

7. Evidence gaps

Do you need additional information in order to complete the information in the previous questions? No

The project was developed from comparison of Inclusive Growth Diagnostic data which compared Moray statistics against National averages. As the business case has developed benefits have been identified and key measures will be implemented prior to the delivery phase in order that they can be baselined and performance improvements demonstrated.

8. Mitigating action

Can the impact of the proposed policy/activity be mitigated? Yes

Please explain

In relation to the positive impacts identified in the protected groups detailed at section 5 above:

Disability	All new or refurbished facilities within the project will take account of disabled access requirements and where feasible go above and beyond the minimum requirements of the

	legislation to make the experience for the disabled the best it can be and make Moray a disabled friendly destination. This ethos also applies to work to be done on access routes to and from facilities within the Cultural Quarter and across to the town centre.
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)	Per above but with consideration for the need for companions.
Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)	All new or refurbished facilities within the project will include somewhere private for someone who is pregnant or breastfeeding to rest, and to provide a private, hygienic and safe place for breastfeeding, and to store milk if necessary.
Age (include children, young people, midlife and older people)	It is a key objective of the project to attract and retain more young people in Moray.
Gender reassignment	Consideration to be given to unisex toilet facilities being installed as standard to remove barriers.
Inequalities arising from socio-economic differences	Inclusive growth is a key aim of the Growth Deal and key social impacts have been identified within the project relating to health and well-being for all groups.
Human Rights	Enhanced cultural opportunities have been demonstrated to give rise to wider freedom of thought, conscience and religion (article 9 of Human Rights Act) freedom of expression (article 10). This is evidenced in the Economic Impact Assessment comparison data with other towns/cities that have already developed cultural quarters. Article 14 of the human rights act (protection from discrimination) is engaged in considering accessibility for various protected groups as well as groups disadvantaged due to rural isolation.

9. Justification

If nothing can be done to reduce the negative impact(s) but the proposed policy/activity must go ahead, what justification is there to continue with the change?

There are no negative impacts as the project will increase and enhance facilities and is not reducing anything.

What is the aim of the proposal?

1. To increase tourism in Moray by providing a focal point of significance to draw in additional visitors and signpost them to attractions right across the area.

2. The project will provide an enhanced cultural and evening economy offering which will help to attract and retain young people in the area.

Have you considered alternatives?

An option appraisal exercise was undertaken with key stakeholders to identify the preferred solution which was then verified by independent economic and social impact assessment, as outlined in Appendices 4 and 5 of the business case.

SECTION 3 CONCLUDING THE EIA

Concluding the EIA

1. No negative impacts on any of the protected groups were found.	✓
2. Some negative impacts have been identified but these can be mitigated as outlined in question 8.	
3. Negative impacts cannot be fully mitigated the proposals are thought to be justified as outlined in question 9.	
4. It is advised not to go ahead with the proposals.	

Decision
Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposed actions:

The project will proceed as it has significant positive impacts for all residents and visitors to the area.

Date of Decision: 31/01/2020

Sign off and authorisation:

Service	Economy, Environment & Finance
Department	Economic Growth and Development
Policy/activity subject to EIA	Moray Growth Deal Cultural Quarter Project
We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Dave Moreton Position: MGD Programme Manager Date: 31/01/20
Authorisation by head of service or director.	Name: Jim Grant Position: Head of Economic Growth and Development Date: 31/01/20
Please return this form to the Equal Opportunities Officer, Chief Executive's Office.	

REPORT TO: **SPECIAL MORAY COUNCIL ON 16 DECEMBER 2020**

SUBJECT: **LEARNING ESTATE STRATEGY**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 The report updates the council on the outcomes of recent engagement activity on a new approach to developing a long-term strategy for the learning estate **(Appendix 1)**, as approved by the Children and Young People's Committee on 4 March 2020, and at the special meeting of Moray Council on 9 October 2020.

1.2 This report is submitted to the Council in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

(i) considers the outcomes of the engagement on a new approach to developing a long term strategy for the learning estate; and
(ii) approves the 'Developing a Strategic Approach to the Learning Estate' as the strategic document that will guide the long-term development of the learning estate in Moray.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The draft document setting out the proposals for developing a strategic approach to the learning estate in Moray was presented to a special meeting of Moray Council on 9 October 2020. Members were updated on the planned reactivation of engagement work relating to the learning estate and it was agreed that the outcomes of initial engagement on the proposed strategic approach should be brought back to Council by the end of the year (paragraph 4 of the Minute refers).

3.2 Engagement on the Strategic Approach has taken place as follows:

- March 2020 (Pre-Covid) an online questionnaire was issued to Head Teachers, school staff, parents, union and community representatives

seeking feedback on the guiding principles contained within the strategy document. Engagement meetings were planned in March as a follow on to this initial questionnaire, however the meetings were cancelled due to the pandemic.

- November 2020 – online engagement meeting with Head Teachers seeking feedback on the guiding principles detailed within the Strategic Approach.
- November 2020 – three online engagement meetings with Parent and Community Council Chairs seeking feedback on the guiding principles detailed within the Strategic Approach.
- A follow on questionnaire for Head Teachers and Parent and Community Council Chairs requesting feedback on the strategic principles that are particularly important to them when considering their own community and local school context.

3.3 The outcomes of all of the above engagement activity is included in the Consultation Outcomes report at **Appendix 2.** In summary, the consultation has indicated broad support for the approach. All stakeholders are keen to see Moray progress with improving our learning estate, with a particular focus on:

- Ensuring our learning environments support the wellbeing of all learners (and staff and community) and meet all needs to support inclusion/accessibility
- Ensuring our learning estate is well managed and maintained in a good condition
- Ensuring all our schools are equipped with the best digital technology.

The comments received during this initial consultation will be used to inform the development of options for ongoing discussion with stakeholders

3.4 The next steps in terms of engagement on the learning estate will be a series of local consultation and engagement events to consider priorities in each Associated Schools Group (ASG); to develop options for consideration in each ASG; and to agree on a preferred option for each area. A timeline of consultation and engagement will be developed for consideration and monitoring by the Transforming Learning Board, with outcomes reported to a future Council meeting.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The ‘Approach to Developing a Long-Term Strategy for the Learning Estate Strategy’ will assist the LOIP in building a better future for our children and young people in Moray and growing a diverse and sustainable economy and will advance the Corporate plan priority reviewing and transforming the learning environment.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy or legal implications arising from this report.

The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out the legal requirements for consultation on relevant proposals affecting individual schools. Engagement to date has been on the high-level strategic approach only. Future consultation activity focussing on options within Associated School Groups and for individual schools will follow the legal requirements as set out in the above Act.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

The risk of not agreeing a strategic approach is a piecemeal reactive approach which will not realise avoidable spend on maintenance and new build.

Without a strategic approach it is unlikely that we will be able to secure Scottish government funding towards projects.

If the approach is approved, there are significant risks with a programme of this scale and nature and these will be considered as the options and business cases are developed.

(e) Staffing Implications

There no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property

The strategic approach puts in place the appropriate staffing resource and processes required for the development of a robust strategic approach to the Learning Estate, which will enhance the educational experience of young people and ensure the estate remains fit for purpose. It will link with building maintenance plans and the Early Learning & Childcare Delivery Plan and the Moray Additional Support Needs Strategy for Schools.

(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.

The strategic approach seeks to address this by ensuring that all Learning Estate buildings meet minimum standards and are fit for purpose.

(h) Consultations

The Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), Senior Solicitor (Litigation and Social Care), Tracey Sutherland (Committee Services Officer), Paul Connor, Principal Accountant and the Equal Opportunities Officer have been consulted and the comments received have been incorporated into the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 'Developing an Approach to a Learning Estate Strategy' establishes the principles and objectives that need to be considered when developing and determining proposals for the future learning estate. Stakeholder feedback on the principles and strategy document has been positive and supportive.

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Background Papers:	Detailed consultation responses held on file

Developing a Strategic Approach to the Learning Estate - Moray

Version: March 12 2020

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1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Moray's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) has a partnership vision of raising aspirations and our priorities include:

- Growing, a diverse and sustainable economy
- Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray:

In terms of outcomes this translates to Moray being:

- A place where children and young people thrive
- A place where they have a voice, have opportunities to learn and get around
- A place where they have a home, feel secure, healthy and nurtured
- A place where they are able to reach their full potential

There is evidence that attainment and post-school destinations vary across Moray communities and in some areas are below average.

Any learning estate strategy must help to achieve these ambitions along with those in the Corporate plan which link directly to the outcomes for our children and young people:

- Provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence

To achieve this, a learning estate strategy is required which will provide our learners with the best learning environments and ensure that there is sufficient capacity as Moray grows as an economy. It is therefore vital that the strategy for Moray's learning estate takes the following factors into consideration.

- school catchment areas
- schools in communities
- condition, suitability and financing of the school estate
- management of schools or groups of schools
- delivery of learning experience
- distances between schools
- educational provision in small schools
- projected school rolls
- early years strategy

The strategic principles are detailed at 3.1 below.

1.2 Leadership in Education is a key aspect of raising attainment and addressing variances in outcomes across Moray. In parallel with a review of the learning estate and in order to provide the best possible educational environment, officers in conjunction with Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT), taking recent Education reform expectations and local restructure of the Council into consideration will review and update policies in order to improve arrangements for the deployment of senior staff in schools.

1.3 Whilst looking at the learning estate and where recruitment of senior leaders is a challenge, we will consider opportunities for 2-18 campus leadership and other models.

1.4 Working with Head Teachers and LNCT, we will consider alternative leadership models in the full spirit of empowerment. Paired headships in Primary have been established to provide more stable leadership in smaller primary schools. There will be consideration of career pathways seeking national consistency of multi headships and the roles of paired and joint headships being formally recognised.

There is scope to further develop this approach and consider alternative Federation models in line with current policy as well as alternatives. The ambition has always been to have Head Teachers non class committed to allow them to lead and manage their school(s) as well as allowing them to improve learning and teaching and the curriculum on offer.

2. NATIONAL POSITION

2.1 Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy 2019

This document produced sets out a strategy for improving the school estate across Scotland to better meet the needs of young people and the wider community.

The shared vision, aspiration for the school estate and guiding principles and objectives (Appendix 1) remain valid and a good basis for developing our approach within Moray.

Indeed, these principles are utilised by Scottish Government/Scottish Futures Trust as objectives that underpin national investment decisions.

2.2 Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

The Act establishes a consultation process in respect of school closures and other major changes that affect schools. The 2010 Act was amended by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, and the final part of those amendments with a presumption against closure for rural schools, relating to the School Closure Review Panels, came into force on 30 March 2015.

It provides for Scottish Ministers to 'call in' a local authority decision; special safeguards for rural schools and sets out a five stage consultation process, including the preparation of an Educational Benefit Statement.

Scottish Government has provided further guidance for Local Authorities on the Act. This guidance sets out the requirement to thoroughly prepare before undertaking any consultation exercise. Local Authorities will need to undertake significant preparation, have robust information and ensure any proposal demonstrates educational benefits before consulting on any changes. For example, in the case of rural schools if the reason for a proposal to close a school is a falling roll, the authority should demonstrate what it has done to tackle this within any proposals. The authority must also identify other reasonable alternatives, and full consideration should be given to maintaining the current school. The authority is required to invite representations on these alternatives, as well as requesting suggestions regarding other reasonable alternatives.

A copy of the Guidance for School consultation is available **here**.

The 2010 Act makes special arrangements in regard to rural schools, establishing a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools. Appendix 3 details the geographical classification of all Moray Schools as adopted by the Scottish Government.

Education Scotland has developed complementary guidance which provides details on the role of HMIe.

Another aspect to consider is changing a school status to mothballed:

In considering alternatives to closure, authorities may choose to consider "mothballing" a school (or a stage of education or a nursery class at a school). This is a temporary closure which does not lead to a consultation under the 2010 Act. It is only appropriate in very restricted circumstances. When a school roll falls very low, the authority and/or community may consider that the school is not presently viable but do not wish to close it immediately because there is a reasonable prospect that the number of pupils in the area will increase such that it should be re-opened in the future.

2.3 Capacity Guidance

The Scottish Government has also developed guidance on how to determine the capacity for primary schools (this was one of the recommendations from the Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education). The aim is to improve consistency and transparency across authorities, improve benchmarking and assist in discussions with housing developers regarding contributions to improve/extend the school estate.

Planning/Physical capacity in a primary school is the theoretical maximum number of children that could be accommodated in a school based on the number of teaching spaces, size of teaching spaces and class sizes. It provides a consistent methodology for the school estate across Scotland and is used for long term forecasting of school rolls.

Working/Functional capacity is more dynamic and reflects the varying pupil numbers in classes from year to year and is used to inform placement requests and operation of the school year to year, this allows some flexibility in the space allowance per pupil.

Working/functional Capacity is intended to provide the flexibility for limited increase in numbers over and above Planning/Physical capacity.

2.4 Educational Benefits

The Schools (Consultation) Scotland Act 2010 Act requires that educational benefits should be at the heart of any proposal to make a significant change to schools. It specifies that the local authority must, for all consultations, prepare an Educational Benefits Statement and publish it within the proposal paper. The statement must consider current and future pupils of any affected school, current users of its facilities, and the pupils of other schools in the authority's area; and also to explain how the authority intends to minimise or avoid any adverse effects of the proposal.

3. MORAY COUNCIL POSITION

3.1 Strategic Principles

The Council must have regard to the occupancy levels of its schools, principally in terms of educational provision, affordability and Best Value, but also in the context of the ongoing monitoring of occupancy levels.

An excessively high level of occupancy could very easily lead to over-crowding and impact on the educational experience, whilst an excessively low level is unlikely to be sustainable, affordable or generally to offer Best Value. An ideal occupancy level would be approximately 85%, but a target occupancy band of between 75% and 90% is a reasonable aspiration – across the Council as a whole, across any given Associated Group of schools, across any settlement/town.

Looking at a growing Moray, the strategy will initially focus on three key settlement areas – Elgin, Buckie and Forres as the areas of greatest pressure on school capacities.

The Council must agree guiding principles for the learning estate to achieve optimal educational and community benefit: This should include:

1. Learning environments should support and facilitate excellent joined up learning and teaching to meet the needs of all learners;

2. Learning environments should support the wellbeing of all learners, meet varying needs to support inclusion and support transitions for all learners;

3. The learning estate should be well-managed and maintained, making the best of existing resources, maximising occupancy and representing and delivering best value;

4. The condition and suitability of learning environments should support and enhance their function;

5. Learning environments should serve the wider community and where appropriate be integrated with the delivery of other public services in line with the place principle;

6. Learning environments should be greener, more sustainable, allow safe and accessible routes and be digitally enabled;

7. Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning environments should be maximised;

8. Good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all;

9. Collaboration across the learning estate, and collaboration with partners in localities, should support maximising its full potential;

10. Investment in Moray's learning estate should contribute towards improving learning outcomes and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

The above principles set out an ambition for A condition and A suitability for new schools, extensions and those that are subject to major refurbishment. The Council had a policy to maintain a school at a B condition and B suitability standard and this should be reinstated where larger scale investment is not proposed.

3.2 Objectives for the Moray Learning Estate Strategy

- Identifying and assessing the current Learning Estate capacity, suitability and condition.
- Identifying the need for educational facilities, which are attributable to proposed housing developments and quantifying the Developer Obligation contributions required meeting the need.
- Ensuring that the Local Development Plan takes full account of the needs of the Education and Children's Services.
- Advising the Planning Service of the areas in which school capacity is available to meet the demand arising from new housing.
- Matching demand to capacity, retaining only a prudent margin for potential roll increases.
- Restricting the use of temporary accommodation to the solution of short-term capacity problems.
- Phasing out the use of existing temporary accommodation as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Actively managing Out of Zone Placing Requests in support of the above principles.
- Identifying facilities that do not meet the standards set out in 3.1 above and assessing against business for future service delivery.
- Ongoing review of school zones in relation to the changing demographic and school rolls
- Investigating solutions to address spare capacity in schools and falling school rolls
- Identifying the staffing resource and governance processes for continuous review and delivery of the Strategy.
- Aligning Early Years investment, additional support needs and Learning Estate strategies and seeking opportunities for collaboration and community hubs
- Prioritising the learning estate programme to address areas that require significant financial investment in the next 10 years.

3.3 Moray Council - Children and Young People's Services Committee

A key task for the Council is to determine, identify and consider options to provide a sustainable learning estate in more detail. In particular, the Council must consider the appropriateness, or otherwise, of current configuration of early years, schools and additional support needs provision. Opportunities to improve and/or rationalise accommodation, within the context of significant changes in demographic situations across the Council and the principals established for the Learning Estate.

3.4 Overview of Current School Estate Condition/Suitability

Competing priorities over the last 10 years has resulted in less investment in the learning estate. Condition driven replacement/refurbishment of schools has occurred where Scottish Government monies has been available. School design and delivery has been inconsistent with buildings sometimes restricting practice across schools and early learning establishments highlighting the need for a more strategic approach and a more consistent use of school provision. Buildings for the 21st Century provide more flexible learning spaces where learners and practitioners are not restricted by traditional classrooms. A lack of strategy hides the true building condition and suitability issues being faced by those responsible for inspiring our Children and enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Where investment has been in place in recent years this has significantly enhanced the school estate and has provided learning and teaching benefits (particularly in the context of Curriculum for Excellence) for pupils and staff and related improvements in the services for the wider community. The University of Salfords publication clever classrooms 2015 states that **"Differences in the physical characteristics of classrooms explain 16% of the variation in learning progress over a year" with "light, temperature and air quality most influential, accounting for half the learning impact".**

The Condition and Suitability Core Facts (2018) has been submitted to Scottish Government for each Moray school and is summarised in Appendix 2. It should be noted that it would require investment in the region of £110 million to bring the existing learning estate up to B condition, B suitability standard.

The Public Sector Building Assessment Sub Group, as part of the Scottish Heads of Property Services, was tasked with updating the processes for assessing both the condition and suitability of buildings. This was as a result of the issues with school buildings in Edinburgh. This new approach was launched in November 2017 following trials in Authorities across Scotland. Moray property officers, would like to participate in this group but this would be subject to availability of resource.

3.5 Developer Obligations

The Council needs to generate obligations to offset the cost of new school construction or school extensions (as a result of pupils generated from new housing). However, the level of obligations can vary depending on development viability. To maximise obligations received, it is essential that the council maintains a robust evidence base on school capacities and school roll projections. These must then inform an approved strategy for the provision of the learning estate in Moray. This requires appropriate levels of staffing to maintain, review and deliver on the Learning Estate Strategy to ensure the evidence base is current and applied consistently.

3.6 Business Planning & Revenue Budget

It is important to consider revenue consequences of investment in the school estate. Given the reduction in revenue budget in the medium term, it is essential that the school estate is fit for purpose and provides best value.

3.7 Summary of Pupil Numbers

The 2018 pupil census shows that there are 7040 primary pupils in 46 schools in Moray. The forecasts indicate that by 2026 this will have increased to 7650 primary pupils. This represents a 8.7% increase in primary aged children.

The September 2018 census indicated there are 5016 pupils in the 8 secondary schools. The forecasts indicate that by 2026 this will have increased to 5942 secondary pupils. This represents a 18.5% increase in secondary school pupils.

School roll figures for each school are shown in Appendix 5

3.8 Ethos and Aspiration

The vision for Children and Young People will be established through our work with the Community Planning Partnership and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and associated strategies. Community engagement, empowerment and partnership are at the heart of the ethos of Learning Estate Strategy. The learning estate should be seeking opportunities to be community hubs. The estate should be multifunctional and facilitate not only the delivery of education but support the aspirations of the wider community.

4. LESSONS LEARNED FROM ACROSS SCOTLAND

Moray Council is not alone in facing the challenges outlined in this paper.

69 schools have been closed in Scotland since 2016; 6 were previously mothballed, 16 were mergers.

Classifications of these schools were as follows:

21 Large Urban
23 Other Urban
4 Accessible Towns
3 Accessible Rural
2 Remote Small Towns
1 Remote Rural
4 Very Remote Small Towns
5 Very Remote Rural

Work has been carried out across Scotland to consider experiences of local authorities' progress in modernising the learning estate and ensuring it is fit for purpose and sustainable. It is noted that four other authorities have recently consulted on the principles of school closures and each has decided not to proceed or to be less ambitious. There are lessons within the process to note including:

- Authority reverting to the status quo due to being challenged
- Not being able to demonstrate Educational Benefit of the estate changes
- Role of national elected members and organisations (including Rural School Network) in challenging the process of the consultation.
- The need for an appropriate staffing resource to meet the rigorous demand of the consultation process.

As a result of this, a national officer working group have proceeded to organise meetings with Scottish Futures Trust given their aim of promoting estates changes and separately the Rural Schools Network to establish the best way forward.

It should also be noted that following a statutory consultation regarding school closure, which is not implemented, there is then a five year period during which time no alternatives can be considered.

5. MORAY PROPOSED APPROACH

5.1 Guiding Principles

Moray Council will adopt the Guiding Principles set out in paragraph 3.1 to provide a learning estate that supports excellence and equity for all, aligns with the national and local strategic plans and policies associated with children and education and considers, placemaking, construction quality, low carbon and digital in designing the most appropriate investment for education in Moray.

5.2 Management

Moray Council recognise that the most significant factor in raising attainment is the Leadership within Education to deliver Curriculum for Excellence and the quality of the learning, teaching and childcare provided. Individual establishments will have a clear vision for their curriculum, underpinned by a shared set of values and taking into consideration the local context. Establishments will offer a range of curricular choices and experiences including using the outdoors.

At a time where greater autonomy in the operation of a school is being placed on the Head Teacher it is critical that the vision for children and young people in Moray, the standards of leadership and the quality of teaching are agreed locally and applied consistently across the learning estate. Schools may offer different curriculum choices, but the quality of educational experience and opportunity must remain high in every school to raise attainment.

Strategic documents which establish the framework of governance and Leadership for Education in Moray.

For Morays Children - Education Vision and Strategy (will be updated 2020)
Getting it Right for Every Child
Curriculum for Excellence
Moray Raising Attainment Strategy 2019
Our Moray Standard - Learning and Teaching

Moray Council Approach – The vision for our Children and Young People, Standards of Leadership learning and teaching quality is set by the Council through a framework of policies and strategy and applied by staff across the whole learning estate and in return the Council will provide an estate that is fit for purpose.

5.3 Learning Estate

The Learning Estate is simply an asset that enables the teaching of our children, it should provide an environment that is fit for purpose, well maintained and equipped for modern standards of teaching meeting the Strategic Principles set out in para 3.1.

The Scottish Government standard categorisation for schools allows for consistent evaluation, monitoring and reporting on the suitability and condition of the school estate across Scotland. This sets out the following standards that are calculated using weighted measure of numerous suitability and condition factors across the property.

Good – Performing well and operating effectively
Satisfactory – Performing well but with minor problems
Poor - Showing major problems that impede the delivery of activities
Bad –Does not support the delivery of services to children and the community

The current assessments for the Learning Estate are shown in appendix 2. It should be noted that the methodology means that even in a school showing a B/B rating there can still be elements of the school that are performing below that level and in some cases these are significant and carry high risk of failure and cost resulting in disruption to the school. For example Greenwards primary has an overall B/B rating but this masks the fact that the roof condition is rated D.

The Council previously had a policy to maintain Schools at a standard of B suitability and B condition. More recently a make do and mend policy has prevented investment in the school estate with the associated deterioration of standards. This ended in June 2019 a new programme for maintenance needs to be developed together with financial provision.

To meet the principles established in para 3.1 any new build or major refurbishment should aspire to deliver an A/A standard for condition and suitability.

In terms of maintenance of the Learning Estate this should provide for maintaining a B standard for suitability and B standard for condition as a minimum as anything lower can reduce flexibility in teaching approaches. Head Teachers and Teachers are held accountable for the leadership and quality of teaching in our schools the Council must therefore provide them with the tools necessary to teach in order to ensure quality of teaching.

Moray Council Approach – New builds and major refurbishment will aspire to achieve a standard of A for Suitability and Condition and we will maintain the Learning Estate at no lower than a B standard for Suitability and Condition across all elements. The Suitability and Condition standard will be measured using the standard Scottish Government methodology which requires appropriate investment.

Monitoring and evaluation of suitability and condition in each school will be undertaken on a 5 year rolling programme (20% per annum).

5.4 School Roll Evidence Base

School roll projections are produced and published 6 monthly. They assist with long term planning and monitoring of school rolls and impacts on the learning estate and can be used to enable action to be taken to address capacity issues.

The current methodology for School roll projections for primary and secondary schools was approved in October 2006, for primary schools capacity is calculated by taking the teaching provision space in the school, removes the space taken up by fixed furniture and divides the space by 1.5m^2 to give a max pupil number per classroom. This gives the Physical capacity of the school. This capacity is then reviewed annually to take account of actual pupils and their age groups and maximum class sizes for P1, P2 and composite classes which would normally result in a lower functional capacity figure for the year. New schools are assessed to the new 2014 guidance.

In 2014 the Scottish Government produced new guidance to standardise capacity calculation across Scotland. This guidance suggest taking teaching space and dividing by 1.7m^2 and providing the class size maxima to provide a Planning Capacity which can be used for the medium to long term planning of the Learning Estate. It goes on to provide for a Working Capacity to be calculated each year to give the necessary flexibility to deal with fluctuations in numbers and age groups and maximum class sizes, this allows the 1.7m^2 to be reduced to 1.5m^2 which provides for increased numbers over the planning capacity in any given year. For many of our schools the class size maximum is the determining factor for Planning/Physical capacity with many rooms theoretically having greater than the maximum class size allowed.

The current class size maxima is:

Primary 1	**25**
Primary 2 and 3	**30**
Primary 4 – 7	**33**
Composite class	**25**
Special schools and units	**6-10** (dependent on need)

The secondary school methodology is more complex and remains unchanged, capacities can be adjusted through timetabling as well as more traditional methods of rezoning, reconfiguration, extension and capping placement requests.

Our school roll and school capacity figures have been used to plan for rezoning, new schools and extensions and also as a justification for reviewing schools with under occupancy. The result of the change to the methodology would be to lower the Physical/Planning Capacity figure in some schools which would give an earlier indication of schools facing over capacity issues allowing them to be addressed timeously and it would also increase the occupancy levels for some of those schools facing falling school rolls. Due to class size maximum numbers the overall impact is not likely to be significant as in many schools the space available exceeds the maximum class size, but it allows for consistent and standard methodology across the school estate.

The Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education recommended in 2013 that a standardised approach to school capacity calculation should be introduced and noted that low school occupancy or capacity figures had little place in the assessment of viability of small rural schools and where real spare capacity in terms of building space occurs it would be better to find alternative service or community uses for the space.

A further factor in the evidence base is the growth rate predicted from housing new builds, these figures come from the annual Housing Land Audit, analysis of trends show that the first two years of prediction are accurate, but that in Elgin and Forres predictions for years 3 and beyond tend to be overestimated and it would be better to take a prediction of 75% of the housing growth rate beyond year 2 in these areas for school planning purposes to provide a greater confidence level in school roll prediction.

It can be useful to forecast beyond the current 7 years, however the accuracy of forecast beyond year 7 becomes less reliable and sensitivity analysis would be needed to give levels of confidence in any projections.

The Moray Approach – The methodology from the 2014 guidance on determining primary school capacity will be adopted across the learning estate, secondary school capacities will continue with the current methodology.

Housing Land Audit and trends will be assessed annually by Planning with recommendations on the figures to be used for the purposes of School roll projections based on trends and market analysis.

School roll forecast will continue to be produced 6 monthly providing an evidence base for strategic planning of the school estate, ensuring efficient operation and delivery of functions and for the collection of developer obligations.

Sensitivity analysis on longer term projections will be carried out to give greater confidence in forecast levels to enable long term planning through the local development plan and wider community infrastructure provision.

Maximum class sizes in Moray will be 25 for P1 and composite classes, 30 for P2 and P3 and 33 for P4 to P7

5.5 Prioritisation

25 Primary Schools fall below the B/B standard for suitability and condition, 6 Secondary Schools fall below the B/B standard for suitability and condition, there is an identified need for new primary schools to accommodate growth over the next ten years.

53.64% of our pupils currently learn in premises that fall below B/B standard. The current backlog in maintenance required to bring all premises to a B/B standard is £110 million (based on 2013/14 condition surveys), the Council financial forecasts (10 year Capital Plan) only allows for £78 million to be spent over the next ten years to address this plus £40 million for two new primary schools to provide for growth.

There will be within the 10 year timeframe a need for additional capacity in Forres and Buckie for Primary pupils and additional capacity for secondary pupils in Elgin that does not form part of the current Capital Plan and therefore not yet accounted for in the Councils financial forecast and planning.

Addressing the backlog of maintenance and providing for new school capacity has to be resourced. Scottish Government have announced a new funding round and model of funding that will become available and may assist in addressing the financial challenge being faced.

This funding seeks to ensure a B/B standard is maintained over a 25 year period for any school funded and looks to take a more strategic approach to the Learning Estate and working with partners to provide greater community use and facilities at these sites.

Staffing resources for the strategic planning of the learning estate have been inadequate and require to be funded. However when faced with financial challenges it is not possible to move forward with all options for the school estate at one time and therefore the strategy must be prioritised.

The area of the Learning Estate that must be delivered by the Council to ensure education provision is the delivery of new schools, extensions, re-zoning etc to ensure we have sufficient capacity to teach the Pupils in the areas of growth.

This means that the initial focus must be in the areas Elgin, Buckie and Forres where there is a need for new build capacity. This must include full consideration of the existing school estate in the areas, school roll, growth rates, school condition and suitability, timing of development and opportunities for Community hubs and 3-18 Campus development etc.

There is a need for a lifetime maintenance plan for every Learning Estate property and this should inform the strategic option appraisals for all new development allowing consideration of ongoing maintenance and operation costs of the existing estate to be considered alongside options for new build and major refurbishments.

There will be ongoing maintenance issues given the backlog of investment, this will result in some properties failing and forcing immediate consideration of alternative options. This must not become part of the Councils planning process to allow schools to fail to force a review and would be avoided with a lifetime maintenance plan and appropriate investment. Head Teachers can use Devolved School Management Budgets for the purposes of building improvement and repair or replacement of fixtures and fittings but this must be done with the approval of Property Services to ensure work carried out is compliant and does not jeopardise the occupants or the estate.

The lifetime maintenance plan must be informed by longer term strategic planning on the Learning Estate to avoid unnecessary maintenance spend, we cannot afford to maintain schools to a high standard if they are to be replaced within a seven year timeframe and maintenance plans should be adjusted to reflect the strategic plans of the Council. However in doing so the strategic plans have to become more robust with greater certainty of process and delivery.

The Moray Approach – We will prioritise reviews in the areas where there is a need for significant financial investment to ensure value for money and appropriate planning, consultation, project management and delivery.

A lifetime maintenance plan will be developed by Property Services for all Learning Estate properties to maintain them at a B/B minimum standard and to reflect the strategic plan and ensure best value. This is a standard that aims to deliver a minimum B standard across all building elements for suitability and condition. (note: financial implications for Capital Plan)

The Capital Plan must reflect the policy for a minimum B/B standard.

The programme to achieve B/B standard will reflect financial and staffing capacity and may take 10 years or longer to achieve.

Head Teachers may use Devolved School Management budgets for the purposes of estate improvement and repair to buildings, but all such works will be instructed through Property Services.

5.6 Methodology

Decisions on the school estate will be based on robust evidence that is maintained, evaluated and analysed and will include, school roll forecasts, housing land audit, developer obligations, whole life costing, maintenance costs, budgets, quality assurance data including attainment levels, suitability and condition.

At a time of significant change within the Council it is important that the staff and processes that inform this evidence base are retained and the capability and expertise is not lost. This includes the staffing resource in Education, Strategic Planning and Development, Research Information Officer and Housing and Property. A reduction in the quality or availability of the evidence base will undermine the strategy and the ability to obtain income from Developer Obligations.

The rigour required to comply with the consultation processes stipulated under the Schools (Consultation) Act 2010 should not be underestimated and requires to be resourced and maintained within the Council as part of the Learning Estate Strategy delivery team.

Consultation is required wherever proposals :

- discontinue permanently a school (this includes special schools and nursery schools) or a stage of education in a school (this includes years in a secondary school or a special class in a mainstream school or where the council proposes to discontinue Gaelic medium provision);
- establish a new school or stage of education in a school;
- relocate a school or nursery class;
- vary the catchment area or modify the guidelines for placing requests for a school;
- vary the arrangements for the transfer of pupils from a primary school to secondary school;
- change the school commencement date of a primary school;
- vary arrangements for the constitution of a special class in a school other than a special school;
- discontinue arrangements for the provision of transport by the council for pupils attending a denominational school;
- change a denominational school into a non-denominational school; and
- discontinue a further education centre which is managed by the council.

The Consultation process can take up to 18 months, the project planning and delivery for a new school can take 5 years to allow for full option appraisal, business case, procurement, construction and commissioning. If you add to this the complexity of Scottish Government funding and the timing and availability of funds it is essential that resources to identify the need, appraise options, consult and commission are in place to allow early development to the point of being shovel ready to maximise any funding options from Government or Developer Obligations.

Sufficient staffing resource between Education and Property services for the early identification and planning of proposals is essential to effectively plan for a programme of work in excess of £100 million.

The decision making process and hierarchy associated with schools nearing capacity is shown in Appendix 4 and should be used to identify options for appraisal. Option appraisal should take account of the Principles established in para 3.1 and objectives in para 3.2 when establishing the project objectives.

When a suitable shortlist of options is established for each project information should be gathered on :

> contribution to the achievement of objectives
> learning and teaching benefits
> initial capital expenditure
> any capital receipts
> whole life capital and revenue costs
> any expected income generated over the whole life of the asset
> likely impacts on day-to-day activities of existing facilities during project implementation
> design quality issues
> environmental impacts
> any other impacts.

This allows assessment against the project objectives and benefits to identify the preferred option, analyses of options and allow consultation and reporting and planning. The process is set out in Option Appraisal: Building our future – Scotlands School Estate 2004 by Scottish Futures Trust and should form the basis of our process for better Strategic planning and delivery of the school estate.

High level options for each Associated School Group based on current information from School roll projections, maintenance costs and growth projections are shown in Appendix 6. These give an indication of the types of options that may form part of an option appraisal process when developing a business case for significant investment in the Learning Estate. As previously stated the priority is for the areas of Elgin, Buckie and Forres where there is a need to provide additional school capacity.

When considering schools with falling school rolls and ongoing costs from a maintenance and value for money perspective particularly in rural areas it is suggested that the decision making chart in Appendix 7 is used to assist in identifying options for consideration in the appraisal process.

The Moray Approach –
Two new posts to be established under the Head of Education and Resources to undertake the work on Strategic Planning of the Learning Estate, Option appraisals, Development of Proposals, Consultation, business case and commissioning, rezoning and participation in the production of the evidence base and provision in the Local Development Plan.

Implementation of the proposed change management plan for property services to take on the School Estate capital and maintenance work and develop lifetime maintenance plans.

We will utilise a programme management process (treasury green book or equivalent) including option appraisal and business case development that will provide early identification of need to inform the capital plan and maintenance programmes for the Learning Estate in a robust manner.

An optimism bias should be used when developing a school estate project.

Moray will develop a standard approach to school design to provide the necessary teaching environment consistently across the area and manage design and construction costs, this will enable optimum teaching methods and use of the buildings ensuring an excellent educational experience and will include consideration of the Placemaking, Construction Quality, Low Carbon and Digital as required by the Scotlands Estate Strategy. The design standard will consider the recommendations and checklist of Salford University - Clever Classrooms (2015) as shown in Appendix 7.

We will seek to address the spare building capacity associated with under occupancy in schools below 60%, by considering options to increase the school roll, Community/Services uses and redesign prior to considering options for merger and closure. (Note:- This does not impact on consideration of closure and merger for reasons other than capacity such as those relating to Educational Benefit.)

We will work with Community Planning Partners and across services through the Infrastructure Planning Group to identify the estate need and opportunities for collaboration and Community Hubs.

We will align the delivery and strategies associated with Early Years and ASN provision with the Learning Estate Strategy.

An annual report on the Learning Estate Strategy will be produced to monitor progress and delivery.

5.7 Next Steps -Stage one

1. Briefing to all elected members – January/February 2020
2. Implement change management plan within property services. – December/March 2019/20
3. Report to Committee of draft Strategic Approach to a Learning Estate Strategy Document – March 2020
4. Appropriate Heads of Service meet with Parent Council Chairs – February - March
5. Hold engagement meetings and consultation with head teachers and parent councils, to discuss and present the current situation and approaches to enhance the learning estate. March - June 2020
6. Appointment of two Learning Estate Delivery Officers – April 2020
7. Review Inveravon Primary (currently mothballed)
8. Sensitivity analyses on long range forecast April 2020
9. Feasibility study on timetabling and reconfiguration at Elgin Academy to increase capacity – February/March 2020
10. Embed new infrastructure approach across Community Planning Partners to identify opportunities for Community Hubs and inform option appraisals. – March/ April 2020
11. Assess Early Years and Additional support needs strategies to align with the Learning Estate. September – April/May 2020

5.8 Stage Two

Option appraisal and business case development for each ASG with the order of priority addressing the critical issues in Elgin, Forres and Buckie, followed by Keith, Milnes, Lossiemouth and Speyside.

This is a significant piece of work that will take two members of staff more than 5 years to complete as it would include option appraisal, assessment and analysis, consultation and business case development. Urgent appraisal is needed to address primary and secondary capacity in Elgin.

This will require consideration of School roll forecasts, educational factors, community involvement, community impacts, placement requests, transport, community planning opportunities and requirements, rural sustainability, development of proposals and consultation.

January 2020 - Ongoing

5.9 Stage Three

As each option appraisal is assessed and a preferred option becomes apparent, this will continue through the appropriate committee reporting structures, proposal development and consultation processes as required.

Ongoing

Appendix 1

Scotland's Learning Estate Strategy 2019

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT VISION –

"Our vision is a Learning Estate which supports Excellence and Equity for All ."

The Learning Estate Strategy Guiding Principles are:

1. Learning environments should support and facilitate excellent joined up learning and teaching to meet the needs of all learners;

2. Learning environments should support the wellbeing of all learners, meet varying needs to support inclusion and support transitions for all learners;

3. The learning estate should be well-managed and maintained, making the best of existing resources, maximising occupancy and representing and delivering best value;

4. The condition and suitability of learning environments should support and enhance their function;

5. Learning environments should serve the wider community and where appropriate be integrated with the delivery of other public services in line with the place principle;

6. Learning environments should be greener, more sustainable, allow safe and accessible routes and be digitally enabled;

7. Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning environments should be maximised;

8. Good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all;

9. Collaboration across the learning estate, and collaboration with partners in localities, should support maximising its full potential;

10. Investment in Scotland's learning estate should contribute towards improving learning outcomes and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Meeting our Education Policy ambitions

Delivering the Learning Estate Strategy must be firmly aligned to the policy aims set out in the National Improvement Framework (NIF) of achieving excellence and equity for all children and young people and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Our learning estate should support the three key national education and skills priorities:

- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
- Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)
- Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)

Our learning estate should also support the following strategies and priorities:

- Learner Participation in Education Settings
- Scottish Attainment Challenge
- STEM strategy
- Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland
- Skills based learning
- Educational and vocational pathways

- 15-24 Learner Journey Programme
- Gaelic Education Development

- Learning for Sustainability
- Out of School Care development
- Community Learning and Development
- Learning Together
- Long Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland
- The National Walking Strategy
- Cycling Action Plan for Scotland
- A Connected Scotland
- The Climate Change Plan / The Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

Enhancing Quality in the Learning Estate

In addition to improving the quality of internal spaces, there are opportunities to further enhance the quality of the learning estate.

Placemaking
Investment in the learning estate offers the opportunity for a place based approach to improve local outcomes, co-ordinating and integrating local services to support communities and progress the public sector reform agenda. The Place Principle (adopted by the Scottish Government in March 2019) which promotes a shared understanding of place and the need to take a more joined up collaborative approach to services and assets within a place to achieve better outcomes. The lens of place supports a more coherent approach across portfolios to ensure strategies and policies are aligned and helps us consider the impact of policies, interventions and investments as a whole. For capital budgets this means identifying and prioritising the right projects to achieve the goals of the principle and other government objectives. The Place Principle is an enabler which helps us, our partners and local communities unlock the National Performance Framework and make it applicable to where and how we live and work.

Construction Quality
In recent years there have been some examples of poor quality construction in the school estate. The heavily publicised incident at Oxgangs Primary School in Edinburgh placed a focus on the quality of the built environment.

It is essential that any new investment in the learning estate must be of the highest quality in terms of both design and construction. We will work with our partners including Scottish Building Standards and across the construction industry to support a focus on improvement.

The recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into the Construction of Edinburgh Schools (Cole Report), the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee's Report on School Infrastructure and the Construction Procurement Review should be incorporated into planned investment.

Low Carbon
The Scottish Government has an ambitious climate change policy target for all buildings in Scotland to be near zero carbon by 2050. Reaching this target will require a change in attitude towards energy, particularly in relation to new buildings. Increasing energy efficiency in building performance must be amongst the core objectives of all new infrastructure projects for these ambitious targets to be achieved. Achievement of these core objectives needs strategic level support and should be incorporated into planned investment.

Digital
New forms of service delivery, and new and agile forms of learning enabled by digital technology allow integration of learning experiences and the creation of new and diverse skills. The use of digital as part of the planning of the future estate, and future strategies for learning and community use should be incorporated into planned investment.

There are a number of drivers for developing our digital ambitions including increasing digital content and approach to the learning environment along with a desire for developing opportunities for remote learning and helping to widen access to learners in rural areas. Children and young people have to be exposed to a high standard of digital technology to prepare them for work.

Appendix 2

SUMMARY OF CONDITION AND SUITABILITY

School	Suitability	Condition
Buckie High School	C	B
Cluny Primary School	B	C
Cullen Primary School	A	C
Findochty Primary School	B	C
Millbank Primary School	A	B
Portessie Primary School	B	C
Portgordon Primary School	B	B
Portknockie Primary School	B	C
St Peters Primary School	B	C
Elgin Academy	A	A
Bishopmill Primary School	B	C
East End Primary School	B	C
West End Primary School	B	C
Seafield Primary School	B	B
St Sylvesters Primary School	B	B
Elgin High School	A	A
Greenwards Primary School	B	B
Linkwood Primary School	A	A
Mosstowie Primary School	B	B
New Elgin Primary School	B	B
Forres Academy	B	C
Alves Primary School	B	C
Andersons Primary School	B	C
Applegrove Primary School	A	B
Keith Grammar School	B	C
Dyke Primary School	B	C
Kinloss Primary School	B	B
Logie Primary School	B	C
Pilmuir Primary School	B	C

School	Suitability	Condition
Keith Grammar	B	C
Botriphnie Primary School	B	B
Crossroads Primary School	B	C
Keith Primary School	A	A
Newmill Primary School	B	B
Rothiemay Primary School	B	B
St Thomas Primary School	B	C
Lossiemouth High School	A	A
Burghead Primary School	B	C
Hopeman Primary School	B	B
Hythehill Primary School	B	C
St Gerardines Primary School	B	B
Milnes High School	B	C
Lhanbryde Primary School	B	B
Milnes Primary School	B	B
Mosstodloch Primary School	B	C
Speyside High School	B	C
Aberlour Primary School	B	B
Craigellachie Primary School	B	B
Glenlivet Primary School	B	C
Inveravon Primary School	B	C
Knockando Primary School	B	C
Mortlach Primary School	B	C
Rothes Primary School	B	B
Tomintoul Primary School	B	C

Appendix 3

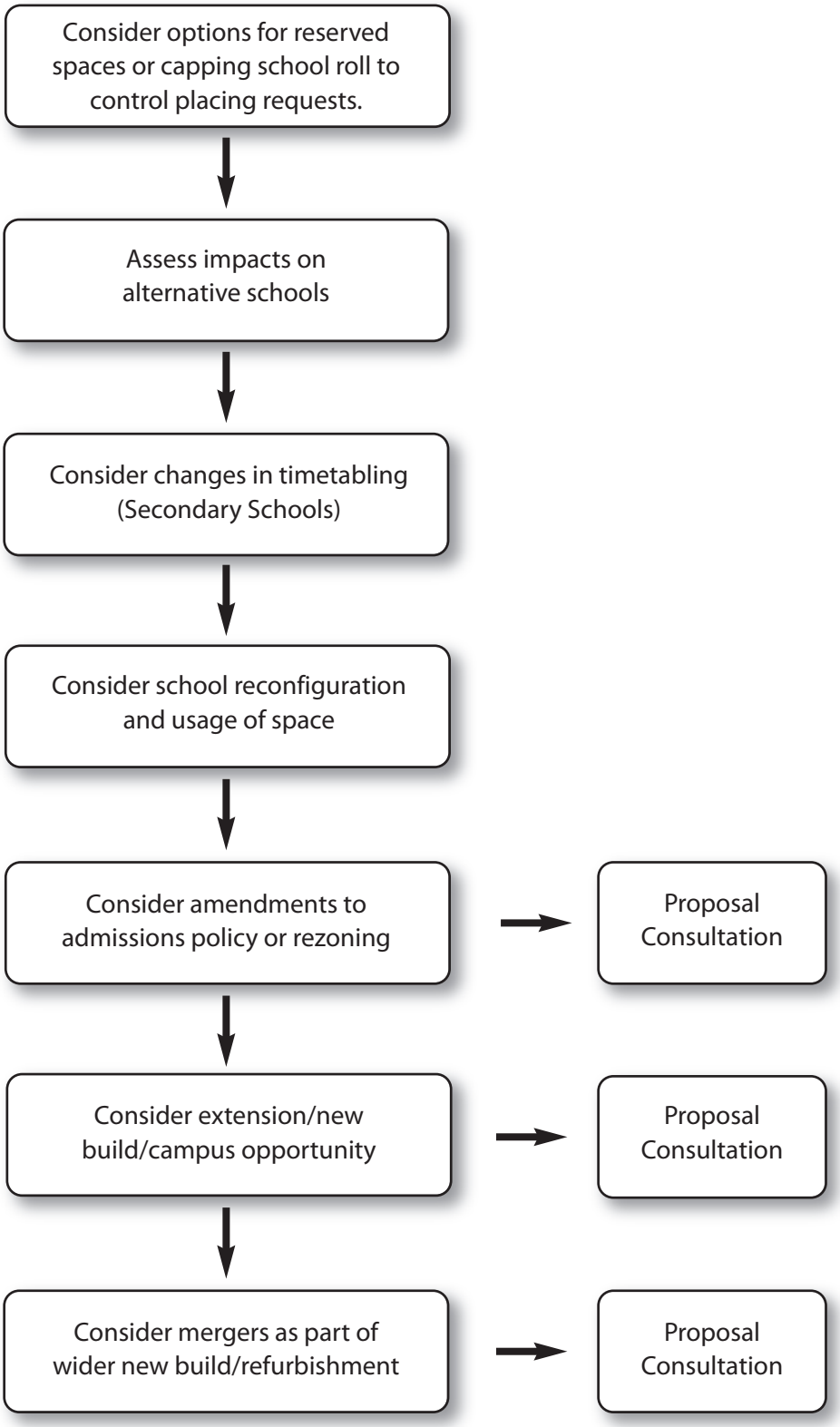
GEOGRAPHICAL CLASSIFICATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS AS ADOPTED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Classification by SEED	Application Within Moray
"Large Urban Areas" (settlements over 125,000)	
"Other Urban Areas" (settlements of 10,000 to 125,000)	Andersons Primary School Applegrove Primary School Bishopmill Primary School East End Primary School Elgin Academy Elgin High School Forres Academy Greenward Primary Linkwood Primary New Elgin Primary Pilmuir Primary Seafield Primary St Sylvesters Primary RC West End Primary
"Accessible small towns" (settlements of between 3,000 and 10,000 and within 30 mins drive of a settlement of 10,000 or over)	Hythehill Primary St Gerardine Primary
Accessible Rural Areas" (settlements of less than 3,000 and within 30 mins drive of a settlement of 10,000 or more)	Aberlour Primary Alves Primary Burghead Primary Craigellachie Primary Dallas Primary Dyke Primary Gordonstoun School Hopeman Primary Kinloss Primary Lhanbryde Primary Logie Primary Lossiemouth High School Milnes High School Milnes Primary Mosstodloch Primary Mosstowie Primary Portgordon Primary Rothes Primary Speyside High School

"Remote Small Towns" - Remote small town (settlements with population between3,000 and 9,999 and more than 30 minutes drive from a settlement with a population of 10,000 or more)	Buckie High School Cluny Primary School Keith Grammar School Keith Primary School Millbank Primary School Portessie Primary School St Peter's RC Primary School St Thomas RC Primary School
"Remote Rural Areas" - Remote rural (areas with a population of less than 3,000 and more than 30 minutes drive from a settlement with a population of 10,00 or more)	Botriphnie Primary School Crossroads Primary School Cullen Primary School Findochty Primary School Glenlivet Primary School Knockando Primary School Mortlach Primary School Newmill Primary School Portknockie Primary School Rothiemay Primary School Tomintoul Primary School

Appendix 4

School roll forecast exceeding capacity.



Appendix 5

School Roll- 2019 Forecast

School	Capacity (Functional for Primary Schools)	2019 numbers	Occupancy %
Buckie High	944	755	80%
Cluny	399	360	90%
Cullen	177	115	65%
Findochty	150	72	48%
Millbank	409	228	56%
Portessie	160	111	69%
Portgordon	125	44	35%
Portknockie	150	71	47%
St Peters	125	122	98%
Elgin Academy	1,224	1,036	85%
Bishopmill	404	388	96%
East End	256	172	67%
Seafield	477	354	74%
St Sylvesters	242	144	60%
West End	267	222	83%
Elgin High	899	682	76%
Greenwards	434	352	81%
Linkwood	375	154	40%
Mosstowie	75	65	87%
New Elgin	578	480	83%
Forres Academy	1,121	797	71%
Alves	100	74	74%
Applegrove	436	279	64%
Andersons	325	246	76%
Dallas	50	26	52%
Dyke	100	69	69%
Kinloss	276	243	88%
Logie	75	28	37%
Pilmuir	242	161	67`%

School	Capacity (Functional for Primary Schools)	2019 numbers	Occupancy %
Keith Grammar	553	406	73%
Botriphnie	50	22	44%
Crossroads	50	16	32%
Keith Primary	400	308	77%
Newmill	75	72	96%
Rothiemay	75	62	83%
St Thomas	75	60	80%
Lossiemouth High	694	485	70%
Burghead	157	119	76%
Hopeman	286	156	55%
Hythehill	365	321	88%
St Gerardine's	347	312	90%
Milnes High	625	408	65%
Lhanbryde	284	179	63%
Milnes Primary	272	184	68%
Mosstodloch	276	159	58%
Speyside High	562	390	69%
Aberlour	182	129	71%
Craigellachie	75	38	51%
Glenlivet	42	18	43%
Knockando	75	47	63%
Mortlach	183	135	74%
Rothes	175	91	52%
Tomintoul	75	29	39%

Appendix 6

Indicative options for appraisal

1 Buckie ASG

Buckie ASG is expected to experience growth in the South West of the town between now and 2035, Cluny primary is expected to hit capacity issues by 2022 and solutions would need to be in place to cope with growth. Buckie High School is B condition and C suitability although an overall B suitability could be achieved with some refurbishment, opportunities surrounding new build, shared hub facilities and potential Campus solution need to be considered in conjunction with the option appraisals for Cluny and St Peters primaries. Option appraisals for schools need to consider increase in capacity requirements, rezoning, refurbishment, new build, potential for merging and campus models.to address these issues and meet the objectives of the strategy.

2 Elgin Academy ASG

Elgin Academy ASG is expected to experience growth in the North at Findrassie between now and 2035, Bishopmill primary is already at capacity with restrictions on placement requests. Elgin Academy is a PPP school and is in good condition and does not experience the same recruitment issues as other schools as a result, there is a need to provide for increased primary capacity and increased secondary capacity with a new school planned for Findrassie in 2023 . Option appraisals for schools need to consider increase in capacity requirements, rezoning, refurbishment, new build, potential for merging and campus models to address these issues and meet the objectives of the strategy. There also needs to be a review of the capacity calculation formula for secondary schools.

3 Elgin High ASG

Elgin High ASG is expected to experience growth in the South and West at Bilbohall between now and 2035. The new school at Linkwood is in the process of being developed for 2019/20 which will relieve capacity pressures at New Elgin. Elgin high is expected to need an extension by 2025 along with Elgin Academy, and Greenwards capacity requires solutions prior to a new school at Glassgreen being built in 2028 and may require Glassgreen to be brought forward. Option appraisals for schools need to consider increase in capacity requirements, rezoning, refurbishment, new build, potential for merging and campus models to address these issues and meet the objectives of the strategy

4 Forres ASG

Forres ASG is expected to experience growth in the East of the town between now and 2035. Forres Academy is not predicted to have capacity issues or major change and could be prioritised in terms of delivery with an option of a 2-18 campus. Kinloss is experiencing capacity issues now and requires review, Pilmuir is expected to need an extension in 2023 and requires significant refurbishment. Option appraisals for schools need to consider increase in capacity requirements, rezoning, refurbishment, new build, potential for merging and campus models to address these issues and meet the objectives of the strategy.

5 Keith ASG

Keith ASG is not predicted to experience capacity issues but a number of schools are operating significantly under capacity. Option appraisals for schools need to consider rezoning, refurbishment, new build, potential for merging and campus models to address these issues and meet the objectives of the strategy.

6 Lossiemouth ASG

Lossiemouth ASG is not predicted to experience capacity issues. Option appraisals for schools need to consider refurbishment, and new build.

7 Milnes ASG

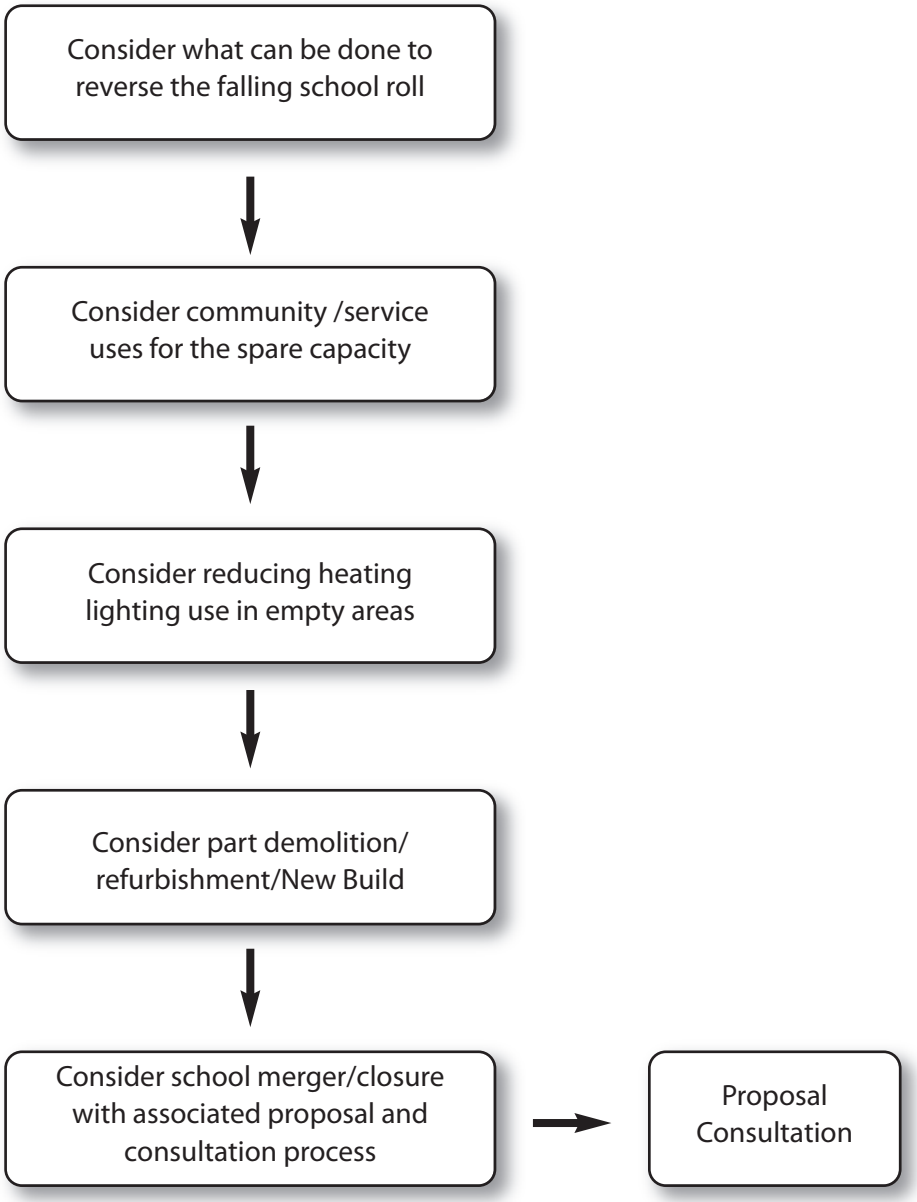
Milnes ASG is not predicted to experience capacity issues although we do expect small scale growth in Mosstodloch, Fochabers and Lhanbryde. Option appraisals for schools need to consider refurbishment, new build, potential for merging and campus models.

8 Speyside ASG

Speyside ASG is not predicted to experience capacity issues but a number of schools are operating significantly under capacity. Option appraisals for schools need to consider rezoning, refurbishment, new build, potential for merging and campus models to address these issues and meet the objectives of the strategy.

Appendix 7

School roll forecast falling below 60% capacity



Appendix 8

University of Salford Clever Classrooms

Checkpoints for Designers

Naturalness	Light	Advice here is given for UK latitudes but similar considerations will be needed for other locations. Sun glare is more of a problem now because of the use of computer projectors. • Large glazing is welcomed when it is towards the North, East or West which receives abundant daylight and has a low risk of glare during the normal hours of occupation. • Oversize glazing should be avoided when the room is orientated towards the sun's path and in this situation external shading should be provided. • High quality electrical lighting is essential to provide a natural light alternative
	Air Quality	• Big window opening sizes and at different levels, provide varying ventilation options. Controls should be easy to access and use. • Where possible, increasing the ceiling height can mitigate air quality issues because of a larger classroom volume, but effective ventilation is still needed. • Mechanical ventilation may sometimes be necessary if window options are reduced owing due to noise or security reasons. • An air quality monitor in the room can indicate a problem to the occupants. Air cooling (but not renewal) can mask poor air quality and create cold spots.
	Temperature	• Radiators with thermostats in each room give users better opportunities to dynamically maintain the temperature at a comfortable level. • Underfloor heating systems have merits, but lack of individual room controls and response lags need very careful consideration. • For those classrooms facing towards the sun's path, an external shading device is needed to combat unwanted sun heat.
	Sound	• Schools should be sited away from busy roads or neighbourhoods, or orientated to mitigate problems. • Planning measures can integrate site features, such as embankments, to diminish the intrusion of noise. If these are covered with plants, then the noise can be further reduced. • Sensitive spaces, such as classrooms can be carefully separated from noisy areas using buffer zones such as toilets, storerooms or corridors.

	Links to Nature (Secondary Factor)	• Where possible, the view through the window should be plentiful, providing a wide-field vision of landscape and green areas. • The windows sills need to be at or below the children's eye level. • A door directly towards an external play area can give pupils easy access to nature.
Individualisation	Flexibility	• Breakout space attached to the classroom is good for one-to-one and small group support. • A widened corridor adjacent to the classroom should be used for storage so releasing valuable classroom space. • A more complex floor plan provides options for activity areas for younger children (KS1). • A larger area, with a simpler shape, is appropriate / more flexible for older children (KS2). • A big wall area (excluding window and door areas) for display is desirable
	Classrooms	• Classrooms should have individual distinctive design characteristics; for example a distinctive shape (L shape; T shape), an added design element (embedded shelf for display, low height window), a distinctive ceiling design or a distinct location, (separate buildings).
	Connections (Secondary Factor)	• Wider corridors with distinctive features allow safe and easy movement. • Views to the outside from the corridor can improve pupils' orientation around the school. • Siting library facilities, in corridors or atria, where they become part of the natural flow of the school, appears to be beneficial for Reading progress.
Stimulation-appropriate level of	Complexity	• Choices in the shape and form of the classroom floor plan can be used to create visual interest. • A balance between a space that is too boring and too complex is needed while considering the functionality of the space.
	Colour	• Light walls with a feature wall, highlighted in a brighter colour, create an appropriate level of stimulation. • Bright colours on furnishings, e.g. floors/carpets, shading coverings, desk and chairs can be introduced as accents to the overall environment.

Checkpoints for Teachers

Naturalness	Light	• Keeping glazing clear, by minimizing occlusion of the windows can maximise environmental benefits from natural light. • Access and active use of the blinds/curtains is needed to address problems with glare. • Careful siting of high power projector to minimise need to close blinds. • Shrubs or planters placed outside south-facing windows can reduce glare.
	Air quality	• A typical classroom with thirty pupils will normally need active ventilation within a 1 hour lesson. Avoiding obstructing access the window openings is important. • Excess CO2 can cause drowsiness and inattention and a CO2 meter in the classroom can give teachers an indication of an air quality problem.
	Temperature	• If local temperature control is possible (using a thermostat) the classroom should be kept cool, but comfortable, for optimum learning conditions. • If sun heat gain is a problem and there is no external shading, then active use of blinds and ventilation is essential to mitigate the problem.
	Sound (Secondary Factor)	• The effect of adding sound-absorbing treatment to rooms is significant. Soft furnishings and posters are good sound absorbers. • Rubber feet on movable furniture can buffer any noise generated, if maintained. • Small carpeted can make a positive difference to noise attenuation.
	Links to Nature	• Views through windows of green areas, thought to be of benefit, can be hindered by occlusion by window displays and furniture. • Natural elements in the classroom such as plants, wooden chairs and /or desks allow pupils to experience natural elements.
Individualisation	Flexibility	• Well-defined and age appropriate learning zones are important to facilitate learning. • Younger pupils need several well-defined zones for play-based learning activities. • For older pupils simpler space configurations support more formal teaching. • Lower height furniture provides more wall area available for varied displays.

	Ownership	• A classroom that includes pupil-created work in displays will provide a sense of ownership. • A classroom that is distinctly different (using displays) creates a sense of familiarity. • Allowing pupils to personalise aspects of the classroom, such as lockers, coat pegs or drawers, creates a sense of belonging. • Quality ergonomic furniture and equipment can be used to create a child centred space.
	Connection (Secondary Factor)	• Ideally corridors should be kept sufficiently clear for ease of circulation. • Distinctive displays outside the classrooms or at junctions create orienting landmarks and avoid an institutional-style effect. • "Corridor libraries" are both orienting and a good use of wide corridors spaces.
Stimulation – appropriate level of	Complexity	• A mid-level of Complexity is sought for an effective learning environment. • Displays should be designed to provide a lively sense to the classroom, but without becoming chaotic. As a rule of thumb 20-50% of the available wall space should be kept clear. • In deciding how much extra visual complexity to introduce, the basic characteristics of the room should be taken into account.
	Colour	• A mid-level of stimulation overall is sought for an effective learning environment. - First assess the colour elements in place that cannot be readily changed - Then decisions can be taken about how much bright colour should be introduced into other aspects • The aim is increase stimulation in a dull classroom, or reduce it if it is already too bright.

tate

Learning Estate Strategy Consultation Outcomes – December 2020

Summary of Consultation Outcomes

Consultation and engagement on the 'Approach to Developing a Long-term Strategy for the Learning Estate' has included an online questionnaire on the guiding principles contained within the strategy document (issued to Head Teachers, school staff, parents, union and community representatives); engagement meetings with Head Teachers, Parent Council and Community Council representatives; and a follow up questionnaire asking attendees at the engagement meetings to highlight the principles that are most important to them.

The consultation has indicated broad support for the approach amongst all stakeholders.

All stakeholders are keen to see Moray progress with improving our learning estate, with a particular focus on:

- Ensuring our learning environments support the wellbeing of all learners (and staff and community) and meet all needs to support inclusion/accessibility
- Ensuring our learning estate is well managed and maintained in a good condition
- Ensuring all our schools are equipped with the best digital technology.

All stakeholders were appreciative of the opportunity to comment on the strategic approach, but were keen to move forward with more detailed discussions regarding option appraisals for each Associated Schools Group. Local engagement will commence in the new year.

The comments received during this initial consultation will be used to inform the development of options for ongoing discussion with stakeholders.

Note: the detailed consultation responses are available as a background paper

Appendix 2

1. Stakeholder Questionnaire – March 2020

A. Summary of responses received

- 300 responses received.
- Respondents were primarily school staff and parents/carers.
- The greatest number of responses were from the Buckie and Forres ASGs.
- The majority of respondents (80.7%) were supportive of the principles as set out within the strategy.
- Amongst staff there was a high level of support (>90%) for most principles, with the exception of:
    - The development of schools as community/public service hubs (14% against)
    - Maintaining schools that are below capacity by increasing the school roll through rezoning (12.5% against)
    - Maintaining schools that are below capacity by utilizing the space for other services or community facilities (13.2% against)
- Amongst members of the community there was broad support for most principles, with the most support for digital enablement and ensuring our schools are designed to meet the needs of all learners. There was a mixed view on whether we should maintain schools that are below capacity by increasing the school roll through rezoning (48.3% for and 41.7% against).
- Amongst parents/carers there was greatest support for the following principles:
    - All learners in Moray should have the opportunity to learn in high quality school buildings (78.7% for)
    - School buildings should be designed to meet the needs of all learners (87.2% for)
    - Staff and communities should be fully involved in decision making for their local schools (87.2% for)

  There was less support for the principle that schools should be developed as community/public sector hubs (23.4% against) and that the programme should be prioritized based on population growth and current maintenance issues (18.1% against).

- The comments received reflect differing views, priorities and concerns including:
    - The difficulties of working within buildings that are below standard;
    - The importance of appropriate facilities that can enhance the quality of education and enable schools to respond effectively to the challenges they are facing;
    - The importance of digital;
    - The challenge of rezoning in a rural context, but recognition that this can support the sustainability of small rural schools;
    - The desire to retain schools within our communities;
    - An understanding of the need to prioritise areas of population growth, but we should also be mindful of the needs of other areas in Moray;
    - A desire to invest in quality community assets;
    - Some support for the closure of small schools where there is an educational benefit in doing so.
    - The solution may be different in each community/ASG

2. Engagement Meetings – November 2020

A. Summary of Head Teacher Feedback

- A priority should be supporting the wellbeing of all learners (and the staff that work in our schools) and ensuring our buildings meet all needs to support inclusion/accessibility.
- Flexible learning spaces are key, but they need to be designed with school-based staff and be as flexible as possible.
- Agree that our learning environments need to be greener and more sustainable but the solution may be different in different contexts.
- Outdoor learning and making the best use of our outdoor spaces is important, but we need to ensure our outdoor spaces are secure and safe. Our buildings also need to be designed to support regular movement between indoor and outdoor spaces (taking account of the need to change shoes, put on coats etc).
- Digital learning is important but we need reliable broadband/Wifi access and sufficient ICT support from our central ICT teams.
- Community integration is welcomed but there should a strategy for community use at the outset, prior to any agreement on building design.
- Equity in terms of access to resources and facilities across Moray needs to be considered.
- School building design/planning needs to be take account of safer routes to school, drop-off points for cars and buses etc.

B. Summary of Feedback from Parent and Community Council Chairs

23 Parent and Community Council representatives attended across three engagement sessions

There was broad support for the aspirations, principles and aims of the learning estate strategy with comments received on each of the principles discussed as follows:

The learning estate should be well managed and maintained in a good condition

- Important to have a shared standard that would include upgraded buildings and new builds
- Would like more information on criteria for A-C ratings in terms of condition and suitability

Learning Environments should facilitate excellent learning and teaching – flexible learning spaces rather than traditional classrooms

- Need to cater for children who prefer traditional learning spaces too
- Concern about noise levels in open plan spaces
- Staff need to be consulted on design – should be considered alongside teaching methods
- We need a better understanding of what is meant by a flexible learning space
- Space for parent interaction is important too

Learning Environments should support the wellbeing of all learners and meet all needs to support inclusion/accessibility

- Inclusion and accessibility is important for staff and community users as well as learners
- Inclusion and accessibility shouldn't just be for physical needs but also pupils with communication needs

Learning Environments should be greener and more sustainable

- How does sustainability and greener ambitions fit with older buildings that may not be suitable for refurbishing?

Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning spaces should be maximised

- Lockdown and COVID teaching highlights the benefits of access to outdoor learning
- Parents have seen the benefits of more outdoor learning since it has become more common due to COVID.

Learning environments should have the best digital technology

- Technology is fast evolving – a balance is required to avoid overuse and different levels are "best" for Primary and Secondary
- Training for teaching staff and the provision of ICT kit should be linked to this core principle
- This would enable improved links between schools and further and higher education – blended learning for better access to courses

The learning estate needs to be managed in line with changing demographics – so that any capacity issues can be dealt with in timely way

- Would like to see "managed and maintained in line with…"

Schools should serve the wider community and be integrated with other services (sport & leisure, libraries, health, others?)

- Community integration – particularly small, rural schools – is important. Integrating age groups from nursery to elderly can be beneficial (might not suit all communities)
- Sharing services shouldn't be at the detriment to other facilities in the community – i.e. creating a community space shouldn't take over from a community run hall
- Does shared facilities mean shared costs? i.e. integrated staffing models
- More integration of leisure facilities i.e. all weather pitches for community use as well as school

Target occupancy of our schools should be between 75% and 90%

- Target occupancy should be over a longer period of time and not just the numbers in any given year– could be a lot going up to secondary one year with less starting school but capacity is needed the following year

Where there are falling school rolls we should explore options for use of the spare capacity to benefit the community.

- Define what "spare capacity" means – space might be used for art/drama/music etc so isn't underutilised but might not have children in it

3. Follow on Questionnaire

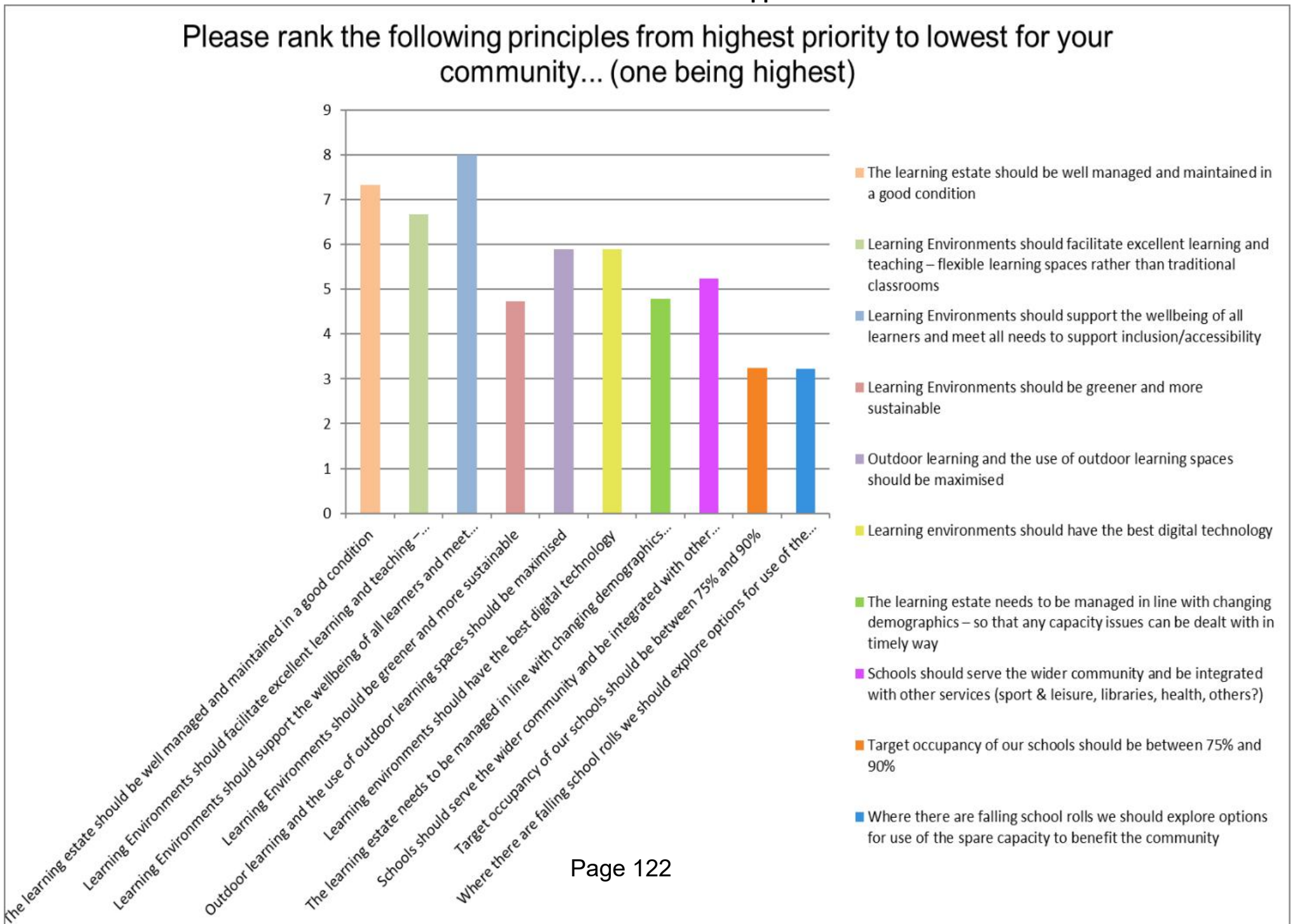
The follow on questionnaire asked respondents to rank the strategy principles in priority order. The principles ranked as highest priority were:

- Learning environments should support the wellbeing of all learners and meet all needs to support inclusion/accessibility.
- The learning estate should be well managed and maintained in good condition.

The principles ranked as lowest priority were:

- Target occupancy for our schools should be between 75% and 90%.
- Where there are falling school rolls we should explore options for use of the spare capacity to benefit the community

Appendix 2


Please rank the following principles from highest priority to lowest for your community... (one being highest)
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
The learning estate should be well managed and maintained in a good condition
Learning Environments should facilitate excellent learning and teaching –...
Learning Environments should support the wellbeing of all learners and meet...
Learning Environments should be greener and more sustainable
Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning spaces should be maximised
Learning environments should have the best digital technology
The learning estate needs to be managed in line with changing demographics...
Schools should serve the wider community and be integrated with other...
Target occupancy of our schools should be between 75% and 90%
Where there are falling school rolls we should explore options for use of the...
The learning estate should be well managed and maintained in a good condition
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Target occupancy of our schools should be between 75% and 90%
Where there are falling school rolls we should explore options for use of the spare capacity to benefit the community

REPORT TO: **MORAY COUNCIL ON 16 DECEMBER 2020**

SUBJECT: **REVIEW OF ADDITONAL SUPPORT NEEDS- STAFFING**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To ask the Council to approve the recommendations from the Education, Communities and Organisational Development committee in relation to the staffing and budget requirements for the Review of the Additional Support Needs service.

1.2 This report is submitted to the Council in terms of Section (A) 2 of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to consideration of Capital and Revenue budgets and long term financial planning.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council approves the recommendation from the ECOD Committee to establish posts and budget noted below:

i) Inclusion Manager post to stabilise the services and to progress the transformation agenda (at a cost of £83,258 per annum);

ii) Re-instate the second post of Education Support Officer (ASN) to provide capacity to support schools during the Covid-19 pandemic and to help provide a secure platform from which change can be driven forward (at a cost of £68,244 per annum).

2.2 It is also recommended that the Council determines whether these posts are established for an initial temporary period of 2 years to enable the transformation to progress before determining the longer term structure or on a permanent basis, taking account of the risks and benefits of each set out in the report.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Education, Communities and Organisational Development (ECOD) Committee on 18 November 2020 considered a report providing an update on the review and transformation of the Additional Support Needs (ASN) service, which is part of the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme. The report noted that the programme of work had been impacted upon by the Covid-19 pandemic and that this had impacted on the progress of the ASN project as well as by a number of changes within the service, including the management structure.

3.2 The services that fall within the ASN service are: ASN Support; SEBN provision, Autism Service, English an Additional Language, Sensory Education Service, and Educational Psychology Service.

3.3 A particular challenge for ASN services currently is a lack of a capacity and this has been further exacerbated by the current pandemic. During previous budget considerations, posts were removed from the ASN service structures to contribute to budget savings. This included the ASN Manager post, one ASN Education Support Officer (ESO) and more recently the Integrated Children's Services Wellbeing Manager post. The management responsibilities of the ASN Manager were shared informally, temporary budget underspends were used to continue to fund the ESO post and the duties of the Wellbeing manager are being shared out between Children's Service and Education Resources and Communities, including ASN as team structures are reviewed. However, it has emerged that revised structures to fully incorporate and accommodate the earlier changes relating to ASN were not finalised. While there may be an argument for lean management structures, it is difficult to progress major change with limited strategic level capacity, while at the same time operating services that carry major risks for the council.

3.4 The ESOs (ASN) provide outreach support to our 53 schools. It has not been possible to reduce the team size down from two to one within the current context and operating model without introducing significant risk and it is not possible to continue to fund the post using underspends from Education budgets long term as it removes resource from another priority area. Therefore, the Council is asked to approve the recommendation from the ECOD committee to re-instate the post of ESO (ASN) giving two ESO posts in this team.

3.5 Management capacity also requires to be addressed to provide management of the service and, significantly, to undertake a major transformation of ASN services to ensure they are fit for the future. The service needs to be reviewed to ensure that it supports a positive learning environment for all learners and the demands upon the service will require strong and innovative leadership to develop and implement a new model for ASN across Moray. In addition to the requirement to review the provision of ASN services there are a number of other pressing operational issues that require to be managed to ensure a secure platform is place to move forward from.

3.5 A phased approach to stabilising the service and developing the case for change into a sound business case that can be relied upon for the implementation of agreed changes by mid-2021 was set out in the report to ECOD Committee. This will be a significant piece of work and will require clear management and leadership. As noted above, management capacity is not available due to previous changes and needs to be addressed. Therefore, it is recommended that the Council approves the recommendation from the ECOD Committee to establish a post of Inclusion Manager.

3.6 The report to the ECOD Committee on 18 November proposed to establish these two posts for an initial temporary period of two years. This was to take account of the focus on transformation, which could result in change to the long term management and specialist staff structure. It was also of note that posts dedicated to transformation can be funded from the ear-marked reserves for Council priorities and transformation for the 2 year transformation period. The financial implications section of the report advised that if it was not possible to accommodate the costs of the new management structure within the service budget under the new operating model, any future years' budget provision would fall to be considered as a budget pressure as part of the financial planning process.

3.7 At the ECOD Committee, questions were raised as to whether it would be preferable to create permanent posts as this would give stability for the service and might aid recruitment. If the Council was minded to make these posts permanent, the first 2 years that are directed towards transformation could be funded from the ear-marked reserves and thereafter core revenue budget would be required. It is considered that there will be an ongoing requirement for two posts at this level. However, there would be a possibility that the nature of the roles change significantly under a new operating model and in that scenario consideration would have to be given to how reasonable it would be for the postholders to take on the new roles or whether there would be a redundancy situation.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

This report relates to the priority 'Provide opportunities where young people can achieve their potential to be the best they can be' from the Corporate Plan and to 'Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray' from the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal:

None

(c) Financial implications

To stabilise the service and deliver the ASN Review there is a requirement for an Inclusion Service Manager post estimated Grade 13

£83,258 (per annum) and the reinstatement of the second ESO (ASN) post (£68,244per annum) at a total cost of £151,502 per annum. It is proposed that this additional budget is met from the ear-marked reserves for Council priorities and transformation for the 2 year transformation period.

The service review aims to stabilise the service and ensure appropriate processes are in place to manage escalating demand, costs and risks to reduce potential future budget pressures. This will include a review of the operating model and management structure for the service and the aim will be to achieve this and service demands within the current service budget. However, if this is not possible any future years' budget provision would fall to be considered as a budget pressure as part of the financial planning process.

(d) **Risk Implications:**

There is a risk that if it is not possible to stabilise the service, it will not be possible to provide effective support to meet the needs of children and young people with additional support needs and their families, as required under Additional Support for Learning Legislation.

There is a risk that if a secure platform cannot be established from which change can be driven it will not be possible to transform our services to better meet the changing needs of children and young people, resulting in continuing increases in the number of children and young people with additional support needs (including an increase in the complexity of needs) at a time of reduced resources to support those needs. This will have implications for the escalation of the cost of the service, which could be significant both collectively and in individual cases.

The review aims to provide a learning environment that supports attainment for all and there is a risk to this if resources are not available to manage the service and the review.

If the posts referred to are established on a temporary basis they could be less attractive in recruitment terms and could lead to increased turnover towards the end of the temporary period.

If the posts are established on a permanent basis, there is a risk that the long term structure requires different roles and skills which would have to be considered as a transform opportunity and there could be a possibility of redundancy if the change was significant.

(e) Staffing Implications:

It is proposed to create a new post at Service Manager level with strategic oversight across all ASN services. It is proposed to reinstate an ESO (ASN) post to provide additional operational capacity to help support schools during the Covid-19 recovery and during any period of

change that will be set out in the ASN Review business case and any accompanying change management plans.

The question of whether the posts should be temporary or permanent was raised at the ECOD Committee and the issues associated with these options are covered in this report.

(f) Property:
none

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact:
None from this report. However, the actions as set out in the report to the ECOD Committee will help to ensure the ASN services can effectively meet the needs of all children and young people in Moray with additional support needs both now and into the future.

(h) Consultations:
The Head of Financial Services and Head of Education Resources and Communities have been consulted and their advice incorporated into this report. There were wider consultations on the report to ECOD Committee.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The work on the Improvement and Modernisation Programme is now being re-activated and requires to move at pace, taking account of the impacts of Covid-19 on relevant projects. To ensure progress on the ASN Review it is essential that management capacity is available to stabilise the service and actively progress the transformation agenda. Adequate specialist expertise is also required for the central team to provide the necessary support to schools on the ASN service. Therefore, this report seeks approval to establish the post of Inclusion Manager and ESO (ASN) on either a temporary 2 year or on a permanent basis as determined by the Council and allocate budget accordingly.

Author of Report:	Denise Whitworth, Depute Chief Executive (ECOD)
Background Papers:	Report to ECOD Committee 18 November 2020 Report to Emergency Cabinet 12 August 2020
Ref:	SPMAN-1108985784-465

REPORT TO: **SPECIAL MORAY COUNCIL ON 16 DECEMBER 2020**

SUBJECT: **FINANCIAL PLANNING**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To update the Council's financial position following the projected out-turn for 2020/21; financial flexibilities given to Scottish local authorities by Scottish Government, and the UK Spending Review.

1.2 To consider proposals to reduce budget pressures in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

1.3 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (A) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to considering Capital and Revenue budgets and long-term financial plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council approves:

(i) One-off savings for 2020/21 as set out in the report;

(ii) Recurring savings from 2021/22 as set out in the report; and

(iii) Ear-marking savings from Children's Services as funding to transform Children's Services.

2.2 It is recommended that the Council notes:

(i) The high level of uncertainty regarding key financial planning assumptions;

(ii) The consequent requirement to be prudent regarding the Council's finances;

(iii) The updated financial sustainability PI relating to use of free reserves and the need to remove the underlying overspend in the Council's core budget which this indicator measures;

(iv) Current plans to address the underlying overspend; and

(v) The financial flexibilities agreed by Scottish Government and the likely impact for the Council.

3. BACKGROUND

Estimated out-turn

3.1 The estimated out-turn for 2020/21 was reported to the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee on 1 December. Key headline figures from the estimated actuals are: estimated cost of the pandemic reduced to £7.8 million by application of £0.6 million funding for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) according to guidance from Scottish Government; increased vacancies from inability to recruit during lockdown (£2 million); loans charges reduction arising from slippage in the capital programme and reduced interest rates since the budget was set (£2.4 million); projected underspend in Children's Services (£1.9 million). The projected out-turn is an underspend of £959,000, reducing the need to use reserves to £1.7 million. Current projected free general reserves at 31 March 2021 is £12.9 million.

3.2 This is clearly a stronger position than had been expected. However, there are always uncertainties in the first estimated out-turn and this is heightened this year as a result of the pandemic. In particular, it is anticipated that there will be significant additional costs arising from the requirement to ventilate classrooms during the winter and the financial impact of that remains unknown.

3.3 Elements of projected variances for 2020/21 will be one-off but there are elements which are projected to carry forward into 2021/22. The Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) has recently announced a reduction in its borrowing rates. The Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) has reduced its forecast interest levels for 2022 to 2025 and these were announced as part of the UK Sending Review on 25 November. Both of these suggest a lower rate of loans charges for the next three years than previously forecast and this should go some way towards reducing the projected funding gap.

UK Spending Review

3.4 The UK Spending Review on also increased the block grant to Scottish Government for 2021/22 by £2.4 billion, £1.1 billion core budget and £1.3 billion for COVID-19 related purposes, although the capital budget has been reduced by £0.3 billion. How that will be allocated by Scottish Government remains unknown until 28 January 2021.

3.5 The OBR have produced a range of forecast economic growth, taking into account different COVID-19 outcomes and assuming an "orderly transition" Brexit. Unsurprisingly this range is very wide, particularly in 2021/22. This will influence tax take for both Scottish and UK governments, which will filter

through into government funding for local authorities as well as into local authorities own income generated.

3.6 The UK Spending Review also includes a provision for a “pay pause” for most non-NHS public sector staff. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance has indicated that Scottish Government is unlikely to be following suit. The pay award is a key figure for the budget. It is unclear what Scottish local authority staff might expect by way of pay award. It is almost certain that local authorities will be setting their budgets without an agreed pay award. This significantly increases uncertainty about future years.

3.7 The UK Spending Review was for one year only and consequently Scottish Government has confirmed that the Scottish Government budget will be for one year only.

3.8 Part of the cost of the pandemic is projected to be a continuation of the reduced level of Council Tax currently being seen. It is unclear at this stage how quickly the collection rate can be recovered and how quickly the buoyancy from new build can be recovered. An increase in Council tax Reduction of £330,000 has been funded for 2020/21 but it is unclear whether there will be any funding for that in future.

3.9 The level of uncertainty about economic growth and government and other funding and the lack of an agreed pay award combine to suggest that the Council needs to be very prudent in terms of budgeting for 2021/22.

Temporary savings 2020/21

3.10 In order to preserve the Council’s financial position as much as possible, the following temporary savings have been proposed by services: use of one-off funding for transportation; training, Children’s Services.

3.11 The Council was awarded grant funding for the Spaces for People initiative. Under the terms of the grant it is permissible to use the grant funding to cover staff time spent on the initiative. It is recommended that this is done, with an estimate of staff cost of £12,000.

3.12 During the first 6 month of lockdown / restricted activity no training activity took place across the Council. It is proposed that around half the corporate training budget is taken as a temporary saving in 2020/21. This amounts to £100,000.

3.13 Children’s Services were underspent by £846,000 in 2019/20, as reported to Council on 2 September 2020 (paragraph 9 of the Minute refers). The estimate underspend for 2020/21 is £1,880,000, showing continued trends in spend from 2019/20 and impacted also by the pandemic. It is proposed that this projected underspend is taken as a temporary saving in 2020/21 and the saving is transferred to an ear-marked reserve to fund transformation of Children’s Services as part of the Improvement and Modernisation Programme. As there were also significant underspends in 2019/20 it is considered likely that there are recurring savings from this service area and

the level of savings will be considered with the service and proposals brought back as part of the budget setting process for 2021/22.

Saving 2021/22

3.14 In recent years the Council has considered savings in advance of the budget setting meeting, particularly when early consideration would facilitate consultation or other requirements for action prior to savings being realised. There is one savings proposals is brought for consideration today which would benefit from early consideration: ceasing the use of a software finance package.

3.15 For the last six years the Payments section has used AP Forensics, a software data gathering and analysing tool designed to minimise the risk of the Council overpaying suppliers. The licence to use the software is due for renewal and would cost £31,000 for the next three years if payment is made in advance. AP records show that overpayments of £96,000 were prevented or recovered during that period. However, AP Forensics is not the only tool used to catch potential overpayments and further analysis shows that the Council's financial management system caught and prevented £26,000, reducing the added value from AP Forensics to £70,000 against a total cost of £62,000 for the same period. Overpayments avoided or recovered have been reducing year by year and totalled £31,000 for the period 2016/2017 to 2019/2020, with a total of less than £2,000 in 2019/20. The Council has procedures in place to avoid paying the wrong supplier, which is considered to be the main risk associated with Accounts Payable. The risk exists but is mitigated and considered to be low. It is therefore recommended that the licence is not renewed.

Financial Sustainability

3.16 At its meeting on 2 March 2020, the Council approved a medium to long term financial strategy (paragraph 5 of the Minute refers). This strategy included a small suite of Performance Indicators (PIs), the first of which related to reliance on use of free reserves to balance the budget. The Council needs to reduce reliance on use of free reserves to balance the budget, as such use masks an underlying overcommitment of funds. The position over the last four years is as follows:

	Budget		Actual (est act 2020/21)	
	£m		£m	
2017/18	7.611	3.8%	4.615	2.3%
2018/19	4.720	2.4%	3.787	1.9%
2019/20	2.094	1.0%	-	0%
2020/21	2.348	1.1%	1.715	0.8%

3.17 When the current budget was set, it was overcommitted by over £2 million. Current projections are for this to reduce in this year. Without savings in 2021/22 the underlying overspend will increase by the amount required to fund inflationary increases and approved budget pressures. As indicated in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.13, it is considered that there is likely to be scope to

reduce the budget for loans charges and Children's Services whilst still retaining the current planned levels of capital expenditure and spend on Children's Services. It is intended that these areas are assessed and reported to Council in January 2021. Based on the estimated out-turn for 2020/21 it would appear to be reasonable to anticipate that the historic underlying overcommitment of funds could be eliminated (or largely eliminated) in this way.

3.18 If the historic overspend is eliminated then the Council is in a much stronger position to tackle the impact of inflationary increases and movement in funding from Scottish Government and Council Tax. The January report will look at the current level of estimated free general reserves and the leeway this gives to address the significant uncertainties set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.9 above.

3.19 Following the January report, a detailed list of proposed charges for services will be submitted in February. The Housing Revenue Account budget proposals will be submitted in February, as council house rents need to be set then, but in recognition that the local government settlement will be late again this year it is proposed that the Council meets to set its budget and Council Tax for 2021/22 on 3 March 2021.

3.20 Funding from Scottish Government will be confirmed when the budget is set but it is unlikely that a pay award will have been agreed and the on-going impact on Council Tax collection is likely to take some time to become clear. When these issues crystallise it may be necessary to bring back a report looking for in-year savings in 2021/22.

Financial Flexibilities

3.21 The Cabinet Secretary for Finance wrote to the COSLA Resources Spokesperson on 8 October setting out the financial flexibilities agreed with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury as available for Scottish local authorities to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on Council finances. Since then the technical implementation of these has been discussed by the Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC). Scottish Government requested four financial flexibilities: then ability to use capital grant to fund revenue costs arising from the pandemic – this was refused; the ability to use capital receipts to fund revenue costs of the pandemic in 2020/21 and 2021/22; the ability to vary the accounting requirements for the debt element of service concession arrangements (PPP/PFI arrangements); and the ability to take a loan fund repayment holiday in either 2020/21 or 2021/22. The potential impact of each flexibility for Moray is discussed below.

Capital receipts

3.22 Permission to use capital receipts to fund expenditure on transformation projects which generate savings or reduced demand for services was given by the then Cabinet Secretary on 10 December 2018 for financial years 2018/19 to 2021/22. The Council has approved use of capital receipts to fund transformation projects as part of its budget for 2020/21 and 2021/22. If transformation projects do not require the level of expenditure projected to be covered by capital receipts then the Council can allocate to cover costs

relating to the pandemic. It is not recommended that the Council use this facility in 2020/21. There may be scope to use it in 2021/22. It should be noted that the level of capital receipts generated in 2020/21 is likely to be lower than originally anticipated due to the pandemic.

Credit arrangements

3.23 The flexibility agreed for credit arrangements is to account for the debt component of the service charge to be written off over the expected life of the asset, stated to be 50 years. Currently there is a statutory requirement for the debt element to be written off over the period of the contract, matching the cash payments made. The Council has two contracts – a PPP for Elgin Academy and Leith Primary School and a PFI for Elgin High School – the accounting for which could be varied under this flexibility. When the impact of the flexibility was estimated, it was assumed that the debt element of service concession arrangements was depreciated on a straight line basis across the life of the contract ie an equal instalment of the debt was written off each year. This is not the case and Moray Council, in following the model in use for accounting for PPPs at the time when the two schools were built, accounts for depreciation on an annuity basis. This has the effect of keeping the total debt repayment – principal and interest – at the same level throughout the life time of the contract, with lower levels of principal repaid and higher levels of interest on the outstanding debt paid at the beginning of the contract. Changing how this is accounted for would require prior year adjustments to account for the debt payment consistently over the life of the contract. Both contracts would show an increase in debt repayment in the first instance. The net impact of this for the two contracts would be an additional cost of £504,000 if the accounting method was changed in 2020/21 or £220,000 if changed in 2021/22. Savings would start to accrue from 2023/24, initially at around £200,000 pa. The annual level of savings increases until 2041/42 when the contracts cease. Thereafter the council would be committed to writing off debt at the rate of £1.2 million a year for a further 19 years and £0.5 million a year until 2067/68. In the short term adopting this flexibility would incur cost for the Council. It is not recommended that this flexibility is exercised in 2020/21. This flexibility can be kept under review for 2021/22 bit it seems unlikely to offer significant benefit to the Council in the short to medium term.

Loans Fund Payment Holiday

3.24 This flexibility is to take a loans fund payment holiday in either 2020/21 or 2021/22. The amount saved must then be repaid to the loans fund over a period of not more than 20 years, depending on the life of the assets funded through the loans fund. In her letter the Cabinet Secretary made it clear that this flexibility should be considered only after other flexibilities had been considered:
"I wish to be clear that this should not be seen as an opportunity to maintain or grow reserves. Local authorities are expected to take into consideration the contribution their reserves can make to meet their funding pressures. In terms of the financial flexibilities my expectation is that local authorities will first consider the additional resources available from capital receipts and the change in accounting arrangements before taking advantage of a loans fund

repayment holiday". It is unclear at present what the implications are of the statement that this is not be seen as an opportunity to maintain or grow reserves or whether any conditions will be placed on local authorities exercising this flexibility. However, at present this appears to offer a significant opportunity for the Council to contribute towards the additional costs of the pandemic. Detailed work will be undertaken to assess what the impact would be and which year it would be most advantageous to exercise the flexibility, although it is expected that this would be 2021/22. As an illustration of the likely level of impact, the current budget for loan repayments is £7 million.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))
Delivery of the Corporate Plan and the LOIP is underpinned by financial planning.

(b) Policy and Legal
There are no policy or legal implications arising directly from this report.

(c) Financial implications
The report identifies one-off savings of £1,992,000, £1,880,000 of which is proposed to fund transformation of Children's Services. It proposed recurring savings annual of £10,300 which would contribute towards reducing the Council's underlying overspend. It identifies two areas for consideration which have the potential to eliminate the historic underlying overspend. It identifies potential financial flexibility to assist in covering the cost of the pandemic, in the region of £7 million

(d) Risk Implications
No risks arise to the Council from the one-off savings proposed for 2020/21. There is a risk that the Council is more liable to overpay suppliers if AP Forensic is no longer used but there are other procedures and tools which mitigate the risk of overpayment. There is a risk that restrictions on the use of loans fund payments are made and that the Council is unable to exercise the flexibility.

(e) Staffing Implications
There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property
There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
There are no implications for equalities or the socio-economic duty arising directly from this report.

(h) Consultations
CMT and Heads of Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and any comments incorporated.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 One-off savings for 2020/21 have been identified, and savings on Children's Services are recommended to be ear-marked for transformation of that service.

5.2 Recurring savings for 2021/22 have been identified and are brought for consideration now because the proposed saving arises from a contract currently due for renewal.

5.3 Current immediate plans to address the historic budget overspend are identified, based on estimated actuals. The level of uncertainty around key budget variables will require a different approach to setting the budget for 2021/22, taking a prudent approach to how key costs are to be budgeted for.

5.4 Of the three financial flexibilities notified to local authorities to assist in dealing with the pandemic the loans pool holiday appears to be the only realistic option for the Council to use.

Author of Report: Lorraine Paisey, Chief Financial Officer
Background Papers:
Ref: LP/LJC/

REPORT TO: **SPECIAL MORAY COUNCIL ON 16 DECEMBER 2020**

SUBJECT: **CHARGING FOR SERVICES**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To ask the Council to agree the default increase for fees and charges for Council services for 2021/22.

1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section III (B) (48) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the setting of charges.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

(i) agrees the default increase for charges for Council services for 2021/22 is 2%;

(ii) instructs services to be commercially aware and review their charges with a view to maximising income; and

(iii) note that the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) at its meeting on 26 November 2020 agreed to recommend to the Council charges for services delivered under the aegis of MIJB.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The current Charging for Services Policy was approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 28 October 2017 (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).

3.2 Under this policy, an annual revision of charges is required. In order to preserve the Council's financial position, charges within the control of this council are generally increased annually. The default rate of increase for 2020/21 was 5%, as a savings measure. The default rate for 2019/20 and for 2018/19 was 3%, an inflationary increase in both years, based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and other inflation measures. Inflation has been very volatile throughout the pandemic period and the current rate of CPI is not

considered to be a useful measure of inflation. The UK government's target inflation is 2% and that is a more useful measure of what an inflationary increase should be based on. To preserve the Council's real income a default increase of 2% should be considered as the minimum default rate.

3.3 An annual uplift cannot be applied to all charges. Some charges levied by the Council for services provided:

- are set by statute, some are limited by statute and some have the method of calculation prescribed by statute.

- are impractical to increase incrementally on a year-on-year basis, typically small charges and those collected by coin-in-the-slot machines where the cost of re-calibrating the machines outweighs any increased income which would be generated.

3.4 In common with most other Councils, one of the approaches which the Council has taken to protect services in a time of decreasing core funding from Scottish Government has been to ensure that the Council maximises its income. A strand to that approach is seeking to ensure that – where possible and appropriate – service users pay for the cost of service delivery. This principle is enshrined in the Council's Charging Policy.

3.5 It is anticipated that the Council will continue to have a significant budget gap in 2021/22. In order to contribute towards bridging that gap and to protect services it is recommended that the default increase for charges which are within the Council's control is 2%. Across Scotland Councils are anticipating significant budget shortfalls and a range of ways of bridging the budget gap is being looked at, with charges for service being one consideration. The economic impact of the pandemic could lead to issues about ability to pay, but this should be taken into account when services review individual charges. The two key protections for service users are an understanding of the users of a service and the likely impact of an increase in charges and the Council's socio-economic duty. These issues are discussed in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 below.

3.6 The Council budgets to generate income of £12 million from charges for services, of which £1.8 million is retained by the MIJB. Almost £2 million is budgeted to be generated by charges set by Scottish Government or otherwise outwith the Council's control. Based on a budget of £8 million for charges within the Council's control, as a rule of thumb, income might be expected to increase by £80,000 for every 1% increase in charges. This needs to be caveated however.

3.7 Increasing prices only increases the income to the Council if usage of services remains buoyant. It is known that, generally speaking, increasing prices depresses uptake of services, more so for some services than for others. For example, uptake of school meals is known to be price sensitive, and services where the Council is effectively competing with the private sector need to be aware of the external market place. Understanding the impact of pricing on uptake of services is the first stage towards developing a more commercial approach to charging for Council services, and will be taken into account when reviewing individual charges.

3.8 Since April 2018 the Council has a socio-economic duty and requires to consider how any of its decisions would impact on poverty and inequality. To fulfil this duty an Equalities Impact Assessment will be prepared prior to recommending any specific amendments to charges for Council services where this is considered to be appropriate.

3.9 A comprehensive list of the charges proposed for 2021/22 will be reported to Council in February 2021 for consideration and approval, prior to the budget for 2021/22 being set, which is expected to be early March 2021, taking into account that the Scottish Budget will not be announced until 28 January 2021.

3.10 The Council has the statutory duty of setting charges for and contributions towards social care services. The income generated from these charges is included within the MIJB funding envelope. As the level of charges has an impact on the income to the MIJB and a potential impact on the uptake of services it is considered appropriate that the MIJB recommend to the Council what charges / contributions should be set for adult social care services.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

The levying of charges for Council services is an essential component of delivering Council priorities on a sustainable basis.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report, which is in accord with the Council's policy for Charging for Services.

(c) Financial implications

Levying charges for services forms an important part of the Council's strategy for balancing its annual budget, by generating an amount of income from service users.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. There is always a risk that service usage drops if charges are increased but this can only be assessed in February when individual charges are proposed

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. Increasing charges collected by direct debit entails workload for the Payments Section.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equalities implications arising from this report and issues if any will be assessed at the next stage.

(h) Consultations

CMT, Heads of Service, the Commercial / Marketing Officer and the Equalities Officer have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 A default uplift of 2% should protect the Council's real income from charges and contribute towards bridging the budget gap which the Council expects for 2021/22, subject to any impact on demand.

5.2 The MIJB should have a strategic role in setting charges for social care.

Author of Report: Lorraine Paisey, Chief Financial Officer
Background Papers:
Ref: LP/LJC/

REPORT TO: **SPECIAL MEETING OF MORAY COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2020**

SUBJECT: **POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To seek approval for the revision of arrangements for polling districts and polling places following statutory review.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section II (9) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all election matters.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Council approve the proposals to amend the current polling district and polling place arrangements as summarised in Section 4.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Section 18(3) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires each Local Authority in Scotland to designate a polling place for each of its polling districts and to review these within 16 months of 1 October 2013 and every 5 years thereafter.

3.2 A polling place is defined as ‘a geographical area in which a polling station is located’. There is no legal definition of what a polling place is but it is widely accepted to be a specific building identified for the purpose, which the Local Authority is responsible for determining.

3.3 A polling station is the actual area where the process of voting takes place, and must be located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district for which the Returning Officer is responsible for determining.

3.4 In designating a polling place the Local Authority must demonstrate they have, as far as is practicable, met the criteria set in the legislation and in doing so must:

- ensure all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and
- ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to disabled electors.

3.5 Proposals for polling places and polling districts were drafted taking into account Electoral Commission guidance and criteria, feedback during polls in the last five years, as well as any suggestions or changes submitted during the first round of consultation. The proposals were considered by the Returning Officer who adds comments to the proposals which are then published for a second round of public consultation. This process concluded on 19 November 2020.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 The full detail of the proposed amendments to polling districts and polling placed are set out in **Appendix A** and are summarised below;

Ward 1	**Speyside Glenlivet**
MM0102	Amend Polling Place name Grant Community Centre to The Grant Hall

Ward 2	**Keith and Cullen**
MM0207 / MM0208	Merge polling districts MM0207 / MM0208 into one district and rename MM0207 Keith and District
BM0209	Renumber to BM0208 to reflect merge of polling districts above

Ward 5	**Heldon & Laich**
MM0503	Replace Lossiemouth Community Centre with Lossiemouth Community Complex Library (proposal withdrawn at end of public consultation and replaced with proposals outlined in para 5.2 and 5.3) to replace with Lossiemouth Football Club Social Club.
MM0504	Realign polling district boundary between MM0503 and MM0504 to accommodate additional electorate at Lossiemouth Town Hall and the new polling place for MM0503
MM0506	Relocate polling place from current shared school site at Alves School, Main Road to Alves Hall

Ward 7	Elgin City South
MM0704	Create new polling district (New Elgin Linkwood) and new polling place at Moray Sports Centre
MM0702 & MM0703	Realign polling place boundaries to allow the creation of MM0704 to the east of New Elgin.

Ward 8	Forres
MM0807	Relocate polling place from Victoria Hotel to Pilmuir Primary School, Sports Hall
MM0805, MM0807 & MM0808	Realign polling district boundaries and transpose district numbering for MM0807 and MM0808 and rename current MM0808 to Forres West and Mundole

4.2 No amendments are proposed to polling districts or places in Wards 3 – Buckie, Ward 4 – Fochabers Lhanbryde and Ward 6 – Elgin City North.

5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES AND PROPOSAL REVISION

5.1 There were limited responses to the public consultation stages. Responses are published as required at www.moray.gov.uk/elections and outlined in **Appendix B** of this report. Responses to the proposals were broadly supportive with the exception of the proposals in Lossiemouth as noted below.

5.2 Proposals relating to the replacement of Lossiemouth Community Centre with a Polling Place within the new Lossiemouth High School community complex was revisited at the end of the second stage of public consultation due to construction delays at the site caused by the pandemic, concerns over distance and access from the car park to the new entrance and requirements for potential social distancing at the next scheduled election. As a result the proposal to use the new Lossiemouth High School was withdrawn and replaced with a new proposal to replace Lossiemouth Community Centre with a Polling Place at Lossiemouth Football Club (LFC) Social Club.

5.3 In order to accommodate the venue at LFC Social Club currently in MM0504, the polling district boundary between MM0503 and MM0504 is proposed to be amended as shown in **Appendix C.** Consideration was given to routes of access for the new polling districts including for rural voters, avoidance of splitting streets to prevent voter confusion and balancing the electorate across the two venues in Lossiemouth. This will create voter capacity at the two Lossiemouth polling places for future expansion in both the RAF base and residential building in MM0503.

5.4 In proposing the change above, the use of the LFC Social Club will be informally reviewed by the Returning Officer and Election Office after use in May 2021 in advance of the Local Government Election in 2022 to address any issues arising.

5.5 Due to the late revision to the proposals in Lossiemouth, a third round of local consultation was undertaken with elected members in Ward 5 and the Lossiemouth Community Council. The Community Council raised concerns about the potential impact of distance from particular areas, queries regarding alternative venues and the amendment to the polling district boundaries. The Election Office provided a detailed response to the queries raised and has provided this to the Ward 5 members who will make their views known at the meeting.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

6.1 The amendments proposed in **section 4**, if approved, will come into force on 1 February 2021 at the publication of the electoral register and take effect for all electoral events thereafter, including the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary election.

6.2 Public notices of the changes will be published in line with statutory requirements. In addition, these requirements and with a major election scheduled further awareness and communications will be undertaken alongside election awareness materials including but not limited to:

- direct mailing to voters affected by polling district boundary changes locally where appropriate and cost effective,
- directed press releases, social media reminders and, if appropriate, advertising for affected areas throughout the elections period,
- promotion of the polling place finder tool on the council's website,
- additional information on in-person poll cards issued to voters,
- direction notices on former polling places no longer in use on polling day,
- additional polling staff employed in large polling places to assist with the direction of voters,
- additional information for candidates and agents regarding the changes.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))
There are no implications for these plans arising from these proposals.

(b) **Policy and Legal**
Section 18(3) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires each Local Authority in Scotland to designate a polling place for each of its polling districts and to keep these under review. A review must be completed between 1 October 2017 and 31 January 2019 under provisions in Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013. This deadline was missed due to election staff absence, resources being diverted to administer an unscheduled European parliamentary election, a local government by-election, an unscheduled

general election and delay due to pandemic lockdown all of which impacted on the preparation of proposals and conduct of the final stage eight week public consultation.

(c) Financial implications

Additional total costs of £1200 are projected for staffing, equipping and rental of an additional private venue at the Moray Sports Centre and an increased cost for moving from a public to private venue in Lossiemouth. Polling place costs are financed from the Returning Officer's accounts per election in a budget assigned by central government for all major national polls, excluding local government. In addition, there will be a requirement to provide additional screening and temporary moveable ramps as equipment for the new polling places. Whilst a capital outlay is estimated at £800, equipment costs over the life of the equipment may be apportioned to each electoral event account and reclaimed from central government.

There is also a requirement to publish statutory notices regarding the amendments which will incur publishing costs as yet unknown but expected to be less than £400 depending on newspapers used. These costs cannot be reclaimed from central government. In addition, other free to use and online portals will be utilised.

Additional advertising or direct mailing (as yet uncosted) will be considered as part of the awareness plans for the Scottish Parliamentary elections preparation for areas where there are significant boundary changes being Lossiemouth, New Elgin and Forres. Some of these costs arising may be attributed to the Scottish Parliamentary Election account reclaim from central government.

(d) Risk Implications

A polling place review must be completed and agreed by the end of 2020 in advance of the Scottish Parliamentary Election, preparation for which is already advanced and the formal election process commencing on 15 March 2021. If the proposals are not agreed, the polling scheme cannot be finalised and necessary changes made to the electoral register by 12 January prior to the full register being published on 1 February 2021. Any further changes to amendments to the proposals at this point, will result in additional workload for the Electoral Registration Office and impact the Elections Office in the arrangements for, and the publication of, the polling scheme for the Scottish Parliamentary election.

(e) Staffing Implications

Additional temporary staffing will be required to service the new supplementary polling place proposed in new polling district MM0704. Appointment of these staff will take place at each electoral event as required, alongside all other appointments.

(f) Property

None arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

Throughout the polling district and polling place review process, issues of accessibility for elderly and or disabled voters are considered. When polling place venues are audited, they are required to meet all the minimum criteria for physical accessibility to the facility for polling.

(h) Consultations

Local Ward Members, the Electoral Registration Office (Grampian Valuation Joint Board), Aberdeenshire Returning Officer and community representatives being Community Councils have been consulted during this review. The consultation was also publicly advertised, any responses have been incorporated into this report.

Two rounds of consultation were undertaken during October – November 2019 and September - November 2020, in relation to this review including a local consultation with the elected members and community council in Lossiemouth in late November 2020.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Following review of current polling place and polling district arrangements and consideration of comments arising from the consultation, it is recommended that Council approve the proposals to amend the current polling district and polling place arrangements as outlined in Section 4.

Author of Report: Alison Davidson, Elections Officer
Moira Patrick, Democratic Services Manager

Background Papers:
Ref:

APPENDIX A

(As per the public consultation document issued Sept-Nov 2020)

PROPOSED POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE AMENDMENTS

WARD 1 - SPEYSIDE AND GLENLIVET

MM0102 Rothes (Grant Community Centre)
Amend Polling Place name from Grant Community Centre to The Grant Hall and amend corporate address gazetteer to reflect local name use.

WARD 2 – KEITH AND CULLEN

MM0207 Keith + MM0208 Keith Rural South (Longmore Halls)
Merge polling districts MM0207 / MM0208 into one area or administrative purposes and rename MM0207 Keith and District as current arrangement causes unnecessary issues with the polling scheme and split stations during polls.

BM0209 – Rothiemay
Renumber to BM0208 to reflect merge of polling districts above.

WARD 3 – BUCKIE / WARD 4 – FOCHABERS LHANBRYDE

No changes proposed in this review.

WARD 5 – HELDON & LAICH

(proposal highlighted since withdrawn and replaced as noted in report)

MM0503 - Lossiemouth West & Drainie (currently Lossiemouth Community Centre)
Replace Lossiemouth Community Centre with Lossiemouth Community Complex Library due to building replacement with the construction of the Lossiemouth High School.

Due to current high electorate capacity issues, potential additional electorate from RAF Base expansion and additional residential building expected in this area in the long term, realign polling district boundary between MM0503 and MM0504 to create future capacity (217 properties). ~~Areas to be moved to MM0504 include areas marked as R1 for residential build)~~

MM0504 - Lossiemouth East (Lossiemouth Town Hall)
Due to issue noted above realign polling district boundary between MM0503 and MM0504 to accommodate additional electorate at this venue.

~~**List of Streets affected or partly affected by change:** (↘ See map 1)~~
~~Commerce Street, Coulardhill, Coulardhill Terrace, Dunbar Court, Dunbar Street, James Street, Kimberly Street, Marine Court, Marine Terrace, Prospect Terrace, Schoolhill Terrace, St Gerardines Road, and Stotfield Road~~

MM0506 – Alves & Roseisle (currently Alves School)
Relocate polling place from current shared school site at Alves School, Main Road to Alves Hall. Alves Hall has recently been partly refurbished and car park and access improvements have been made.

WARD 6 – ELGIN CITY NORTH

No changes proposed in this review

WARD 7 – ELGIN CITY SOUTH

MM0702 – New Elgin West (Greenwards School)
School closure on polling day, site not suitable for shared school venue. Venue is at high capacity due to continued residential building in area which poses risk during high turnout polls. MM0702 polling district boundary to be realigned alongside changes to MM0703 and new Polling Place and Polling District to be created. (476 properties moved from MM0702 to MM0703) This will lessen burden on the polling place.

MM0703 – New Elgin East (New Elgin and Ashgrove Hall)
High burden due to continued residential building in south of the polling district. Continue to monitor new build electorate increase.
Additional venue to be implemented east of district and splitting of polling districts MM0702 / MM0703 to create MM0704. (816 properties to be moved to MM0704)
This will lessen burden on the polling place.

NEW MM0704 New Elgin Linkwood (Moray Sports Centre)
New Polling Place and Polling District to service continued residential development initially serving 816 properties as at March 2020. (see comments above). The proposed polling place is within Ward 4 along with additional residential development land at Linkwood. May be scope for future separate ward polling station within this polling place once properties in the ward 4 area of Linkwood are built.

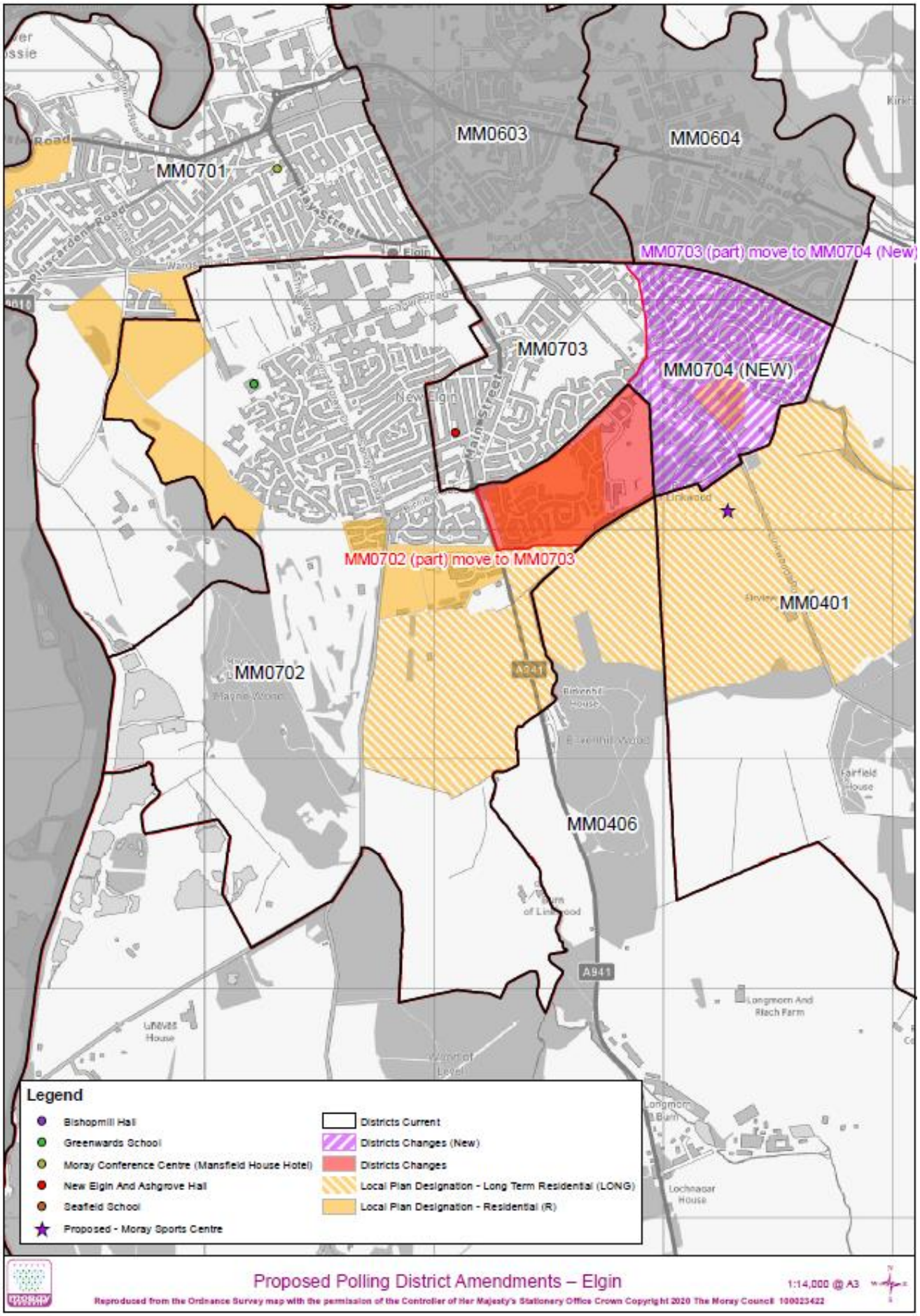
Streets affected or partly affected by these proposals; (↘ See map 2)

MM0702 move to MM0703

Ben Riach Court, Ben Riach View, Doocot Court, Dove Avenue, Dove Court, Fogwatt Crescent, Linkwood Avenue, Linkwood Court, Linkwood Drive, Sandstone Avenue, Sandstone Drive, Sandstone Place, Sandstone Street, Teindland Court, Teindland Place, Teindland Wynd, Thornhill Court and Thornhill Drive (18)

MM0703 move to MM0704 (new)

Ashburton Court, Bain Avenue, Bain Road, Barmuckity Lane, Brechan Rig, Calcots Crescent, Clarendon Court, Cooperage Close, Coxton Crescent, Cumming Circle, Distillery Drive, Doocot Lane, Dunkinty, Ewing Howe, Fogwatt Lane, Gisborne Court, Gurness Circle, Hossack Drive, Linkwood Close, Linkwood Road, Longmorn Crescent, Manitoba Avenue, Manitoba Place, Mcmillan Avenue, Millbuie Street, Ontario Court, Pot Still Way, Quebec Place, Ross Lane, Rowan Lea, Stillmans Wynd and The Maltings. (32)



Map 2 – Overview of proposed polling district amendments in New Elgin – MM0702 /MM0703 and MM0704 (new)

WARD 8 - FORRES

Background

Forres town, and the immediate vicinity including Altyre, Waterford and Mundole, is currently served by five polling districts.

- *MM0804*, *Forres Sanquhar* served by a small polling place at the Tennis club house serves a geographically discrete area. There is no planned large scale residential building in this area.
- *MM0805, Forres East* is served by Forres House Community Centre. This venue has significant capacity for future electorate across more than one room. There are long term sites (Lochyhill) which would be accommodated in the future at this venue. Some capacity therefore has to be maintained.
- *MM806, Forres Central* is served by Forres Town Hall and covers the very centre of Forres, both sides of the High Street to a point just west of the Forres Town hall. There are some small scale and long-term additional residential sites planned in the district.
- *MM0808, Forres Knockomie & Rural* is also served by Forres Town Hall and covers a large population to the South-east of Forres, west of Grantown Road. This area has large scale residential housing sites, both in progress and planned, in the south of the district.
- *MM0807, Forres West* is served by Victoria Hotel Function Suite. This area covers the area west of the Grantown Road, which has seen growth in previous years and there is some smaller scale and long term additional residential sites planned in the south of the district.

Polling Place reviews are statutorily conducted every 5 years. However capacity is generally put in place to serve the districts long-term.

Issues

The two main issues within Forres are the forecast number of residential builds, particularly in the south of the town and the pressure on the Forres Town Hall capacity as a venue to serve the current polling district alignment, in particular during high turnout polls. Although other venues have been identified during this review none are felt to be suitable at this time to supplement the venues currently used and alleviate specific pressures seen above, without mass changes to the polling district boundaries. This is not advisable in advance of major polls.

Therefore it is proposed to make some minor adjustments to the polling district boundaries in Forres to create the necessary capacity.

Proposed amendments to polling districts in Ward 8; (↘ see map 3)

MM0805 – Forres East (Forres House Community Centre)
Polling Place has capacity to take additional electorate.

- Adjust northern boundary of polling district MM0806 to move voters into MM0805 and create additional capacity at another Polling Place Forres Town Hall, leave some capacity in venue for additional long term residential sites to the east of Forres (see comments below).

MM0806 – Forres Central (Forres Town Hall)
Town Hall total electorate is reaching capacity and high burden on venue. Venue is subject to refurbishment on a yet undetermined timescale which may or may not affect future polls, temporary arrangement may be required.

- Amend northern boundary of polling district MM0806 to move voters into MM0805 (voting at Forres House Community Centre) and create additional capacity at Forres Town Hall (58 properties)

Streets affected or partly affected by these proposals;
MM0806 to MM0805
Bogton Road, Caroline Street, Claremont, Gordon Street, Lea Road and North Road (6)

MM0808 – Forres Knockomie & Rural (Forres Town Hall)
High burden on capacity due to continued building in south of the polling district. Continue to monitor new build electorate increase.

- Adjust polling district boundary between MM0807 and MM0808 to create capacity in MM0808 for residential building taking place east of Grantown Road. Amendment affects 465 properties.
- Renumber MM0808 to MM0807 and rename *Forres South and Rural* for administrative purposes

Streets affected or partly affected by these proposals;
Current MM0808 to current MM0807
Balnageith, Balnageith Rise, Balnageith Road, Beech Avenue, Brander Gardens, Cumiskie Crescent, Findhorn Park, Grantown Road, Grosvenor Park, Knockomie, Knockomie Rise, Mundole Court, Oak Grove, Redcraig, Redcraigs Place, Riddock Gardens, Rowan Crescent, Rowan Road, Springbank and Whiterow Drive (20)

Continued over/

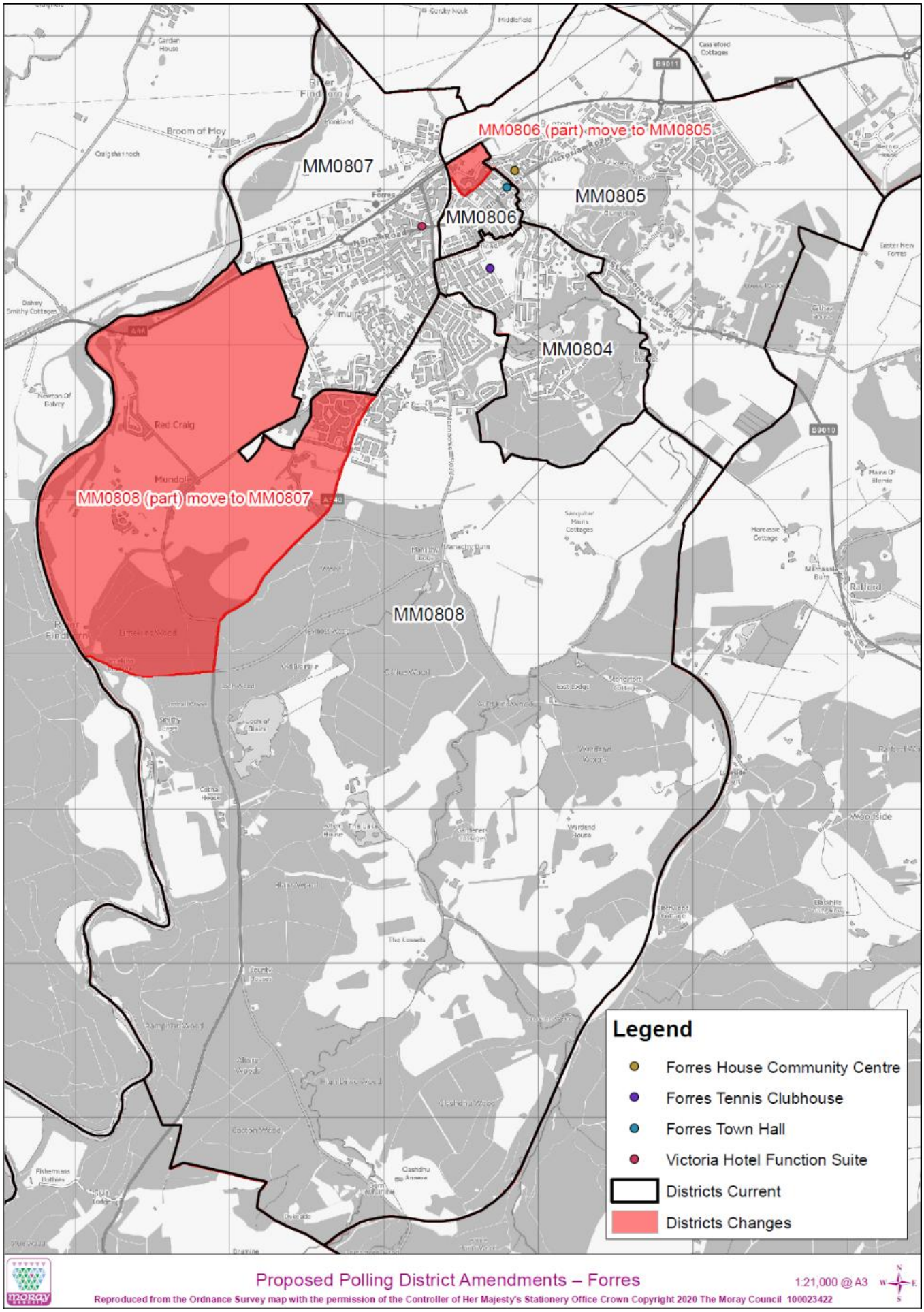
MM0807 – Forres West (Victoria Hotel Function Suite)

This polling place saw a recent change of ownership but continued availability as Polling Place. The elections office has recently been advised that the premises are to be sold and therefore due to potential redevelopment opportunity not be available in the near future for polling.

Continue to monitor new build electorate increase in this polling district.

- Replace current venue with new polling place at **Pilmuir Primary School,** Pilmuir Road, Forres, using the school hall via a separate entrance. School will remain open to staff and pupils with a shared site and local arrangements put in place to facilitate this. Note: Whilst the use of the school is not the ideal venue in terms of use of educational establishment usually during term time, the lack of any other suitable premises in the west of the town, with two already high volume polling places to the east, neither of which have the capacity to take 2700+ additional voters, this presents the most viable option at this time. Other premises were examined in this review and the previous review in this area to service the continued residential development in the south west of the town.
- Adjust Polling District Boundary between MM0807 and MM0808 to move electors in the Knockomie Rise development and all planned development west of the Grantown Road to new Polling Place from the Forres Town Hall and also take in voters from the west from Mundole. (465 properties (currently built as at March 2020))
- Renumber MM0808 to MM0807 rename *Forres West and Mundole* for administrative purposes.

↘ See map 3 overleaf for summary of boundary changes



Map 3 - Overview of proposed polling district amendments in Forres in MM0805 – MM0808

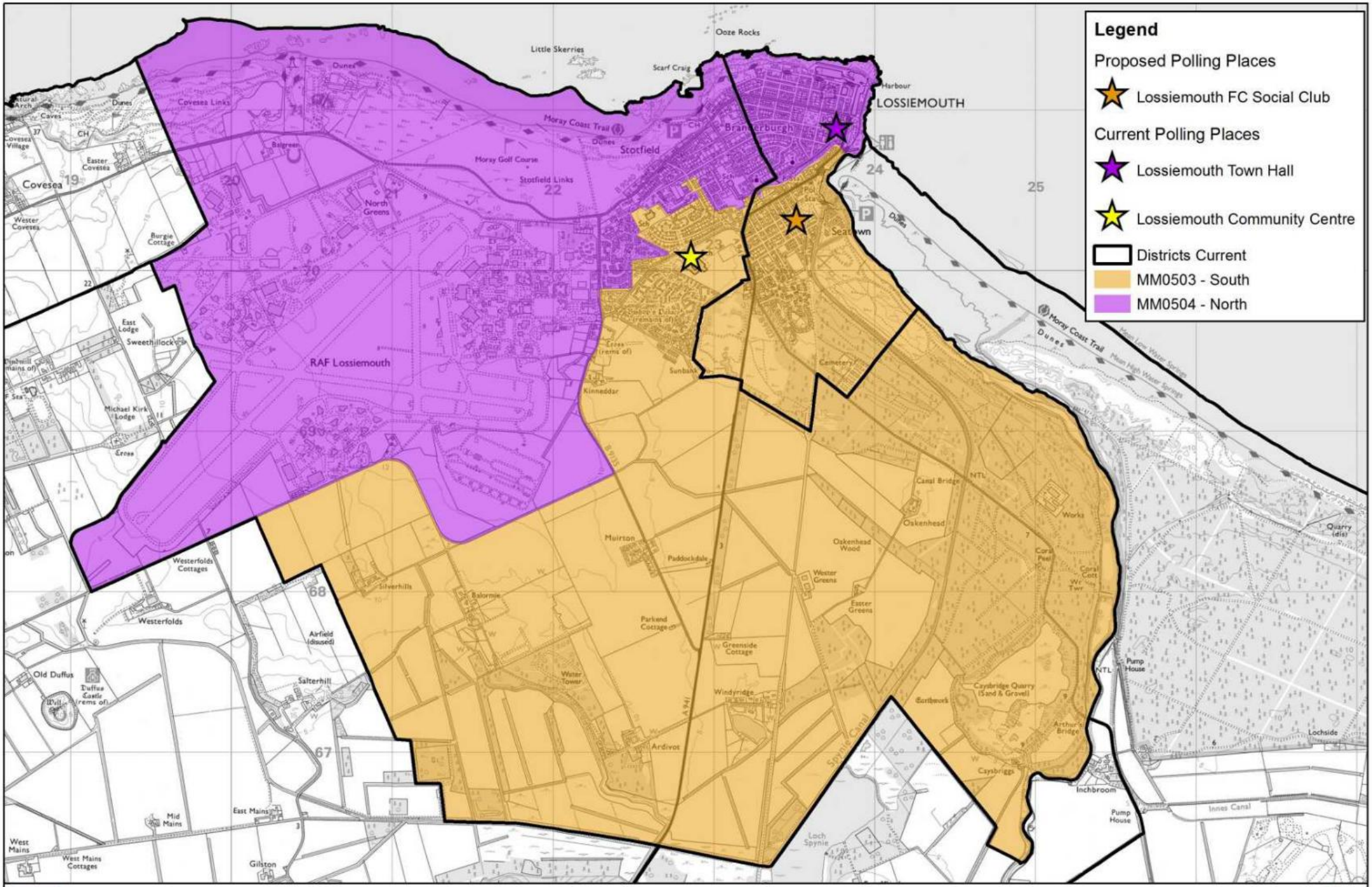
Appendix B

Polling District and Polling Place Review 2019 – Second round public consultation responses

Only districts or polling places which had specific comment made during the second round are detailed.

Polling District	Polling District (PD) Name	Polling Place	Local Government Ward	Scottish Parliamentary Constituency	Proposal	Comments from Community Councils	Comments from Councillors
MM0102	Rothes	**Grant Community Centre,** 46 - 48 New Street, Rothes, AB38 7BJ	1 - Speyside Glenlivet	Moray	Amend name of building used to The Grant Hall	01/10/2020 – Speyside CC - no objection to amending the name of Grant Hall, Rothes	25/09/2020 – Cllr Derek Ross – I have no problem with the amendments proposed.
MM0207	**Keith**	**Longmore Halls**, Church Road, Keith, AB55 5BR	2 - Keith and Cullen	Moray	Merge Polling districts and rename	06/10/2020 - KEITH COMMUNITY COUNCIL has no issues regarding changes proposed for Keith Longmore Hall, as it is the community council's understanding that this will streamline administrative processes	25/09/2020 – Cllr D Gatt – No issues from me currently on proposed amendments 25/09/2020 – Cllr L Powell - I can't envisage any problems with the proposals for Ward 2 as voters will continue to use the same polling station. 28/09/2020 – Cllr T Coull - I have no problem with the proposed amendment in Ward 2 Keith – Cullen.
MM0208 (merge with MM0207)	**Keith Rural South**		2 - Keith and Cullen	Moray			
BM0209 (change to BM0208)	Rothiemay	**Rothiemay Hall,** Rothiemay, Huntly, AB54 7LT	2 - Keith and Cullen	Banffshire and Buchan Coast	Renumber Polling district to reflect change above		
MM0503	Lossiemouth West & Drainie	**Lossiemouth Community Centre,** Coulardbank Road, Lossiemouth, IV31 6JW	5 - Heldon and Laich	Moray	Move to new Lossiemouth High School community complex and make use of the library area (proposal since withdrawn)	11 November 2020 LOSSIEMOUTH COMMUNITY COUNCIL Concern about the distance from the car park to the polling station in the new community centre/library. Could additional parking be somehow made available on election days?	10 November 2020 – Cllr J. Allan The only concern I have with the new venue is the distance from the current carpark at the present building to the new building. This has caused a lot of concern with staff and the public, that it will be a very long way to walk from the top carpark. I think there is going to be a couple of spaces at the new build for disabled but no access that cars can drive down to drop off or park. I wondered if other premises had been looked at in the area.

Polling District	Polling District (PD) Name	Polling Place	Local Government Ward	Scottish Parliamentary Constituency	Proposal	Comments from Community Councils	Comments from Councillors
MM0805	**Forres East**	**Forres House Community Centre,** High Street, Forres, IV36 1BU	8 - Forres	Moray	Amend Polling District		25/09/2020 – Cllr L Creswell - I do think the use of Forres House Sportshall is OTT when a smaller space could be used in the building. It's cold for those telling on the polling days too. Have raised this previously but there was no change. / Heating always been an issue and hard to adapt it to suit sportspeople with the range of uses. (response given by elections office on issues raised)
MM0806	**Forres Central**	**Forres Town Hall,** High Street, Forres, IV36 1PB	8 - Forres	Moray	Amend Polling District		26/09/2020 – Cllr A McLean Proposals make sense to me Suggestion - downstairs in the Tolbooth, for suitability if the Town Hall happens to be out of action during an election. There is an alternative access through the door in the tunnel if the voter has a wheelchair or restricted mobility. (response given by elections office)
MM0808 (change to MM0807)	**Forres Knockomie & Rural**	**Forres Town Hall,** High Street, Forres, IV36 1PB	8 - Forres	Moray	Amend Polling District		
MM0807 (change to MM0808)	**Forres West**	**Victoria Hotel Function Suite 1 Tytler Street, Forres, IV36 1EL**	8 - Forres	Moray	Amend Polling District and relocate Polling Place to Pilmuir School Sports Hall on a shared site		



Proposed Polling Districts - Lossiemouth Nov 2020

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REPORT TO: **SPECIAL MEETING OF MORAY COUNCIL ON 16 DECEMBER 2020**

SUBJECT: **DELEGATION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND JUSTICE SERVICES**

BY: **INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER, MORAY HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1. To provide a progress update in relation to the proposed delegation of Children and Families and Justice Social Work to the Moray Integrated Joint Board (MIJB).

1.2. To provide a progress update in relation to the proposed delegation of Children and Families and Justice Social Work to the Moray Integrated Joint Board (MIJB).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1. It is recommended that The Council:

i) Note the indicative timeline in relation to the preparatory work proposed for the delegation of children and families and justice social work to MIJB;

ii) Review and note the Programme Board terms of reference: and

iii) Note further updates will be provided to the Board as the project continues to progress.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The MIJB on 28 May 20 (para 12 of the minute refers) agreed to note the progress made in relation to the proposed delegation of Children and Families and Justice Social Work to MIJB. Members were invited to recall on the decisions made by Moray Council on 27 November 2019 (para 22 of the minute refers) and NHS Grampian on 5 December 2019 (para 11 of the minute refers) where both parties agreed to proceed to the next steps of assessing the potential of delegating the above services to the MIJB.

3.2 On 1st July 20 (para 8 of the minute refers) MC Emergency Cabinet noted the position statement on Children and Families and Justice Social Work, including an overview of the National Context; the Local Context; The Independent Care Review; the current position in Moray; rationale for transformational change; reconnecting social work; and delegation of services to Moray Integration Joint Board. The MC Emergency Cabinet agreed to note the working being carried out to make improvements to the service and to continue with the programme which will seek agreement at a future date to delegate services to the MIJB.

3.2 Due to the current public health situation and resultant changes in priorities, a slight delay was incurred in order to establish a Programme Board. On 6th Nov 20 the Programme Board met for the first time to discuss the process and the timescale for completion of the preparatory work required for any formal outcomes to be made regarding the delegation of services.

4. KEY MATTERS RELEVANT TO RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Programme Board agreed that the purpose of the Board is to lead and provide strategic direction, allowing for formal decision making to be made by each governing body. Terms of reference have been created to aid partnership working which can be found in **Appendix 1.**

4.2 The ambition is to aim for a decision to be made and if agreeable for delegation of services to be complete by 1 April 2022. The new arrangements will align with the start of the financial year. However, this may need to remain open to review, given the current public health situation and resultant change in priorities. A copy of the indicative timescale is attached at **Appendix 2**.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)) and Moray Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan "Moray Partners in Care 2019 – 2029"

Moray Council Corporate Plan 2020-23 outlines its ambitions to support children and families and communities

(b) Policy and Legal

The legal resource required to undertake any due diligence for amending the Integration Scheme requires to be established. This will be assisted by

a clear identification of all services that are in scope for transferring over to the MIJB

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Part 3) sets out a legal framework for children's services planning, including its scope and aims.

(c) Financial implications

In preparation for the delegation of additional functions to the MIJB it will be necessary for the MIJB to obtain assurance that financial resources are adequate to allow it to carry out the functions and to assess the risks associated with this. The MIJB Chief Financial Officer will work with both the Council Section 95 Officer and the Health Board Director of Finance in establishing the required assurance.

(d) Risk Implications and Mitigation

The scale of this work should not be underestimated. This is resource intensive and is likely to require short term investment to ensure success. The allocation of a project officer to manage and report on the modernisation and transformation of children services will enable a full consideration of risks and mitigations, to aid formal decision making.

However, there will be a risk of delay if appropriate staffing resource cannot be allocated for the project management, not underestimating the legal and financial requirements, should delegation proceed.

(e) Staffing Implications

The project will be resourced using existing staff within existing structures. The project will be managed by the Interim Head of Children Services, with project manager/ officer on loan to assist with the project from existing HSCM resources.

To support the benefits realisation of the delegation of services, dedicated project officer will enable full visibility of benefits, risks and issues.

(f) Property

No property issues identified at this point.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

Not required at this point.

(h) Consultations

Chief Executive (NHS Grampian), Chief Executive (Moray Council), Chief Social Work Officer; Chief Financial Officer MIJB, (Moray Council); Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance (Moray Council), Committee Services (Moray Council); Chief Financial Officer (Moray Council), Chief Finance Officer (NHS Grampian) Head of Childrens and Families and Justice Social Work MIJB (Moray Council) have been consulted.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 To meet the proposed target of delegating additional services to MIJB, it is anticipated additional resource will be required to manage the project and to ensure necessary due diligence and financial planning has been undertaken to the satisfaction of all three bodies (NHS Grampian; Moray Council and MIJB).

6.2 The Children and Families Social Work Transformation Project should be welcomed to manage the transformation of the delivery of Children and Families Social Work services, across the operational teams, which will require a new model of commissioning and approach to our Out of Area Placements, using a strengths-based approach.

Author of Report: Carmen Gillies Senior Project Officer HSCM
Background Papers: With Author
Ref:

Appendix 1

Delegation of Services Children and Families and Justice Social Work Programme Board
DRAFT
Terms of Reference Nov 2020

1. Purpose
To lead and provide strategic direction in relation to the delegation and modernisation of children and families and justice social work to the Moray Integrated Joint Board (MIJB) in line with national policy and legislation and local requirements.

2. Remit:
The Programme Board is to:

- Provide a joint forum for discussion amongst key partners and stakeholders about the delegation of children and families and justice social work.
- Agree a Programme outlining the key milestones to be undertaken in developing the project plan.
- Support the development of Morays social work improvement and modernisation project which is aligned with the delegation of functions.
- Provide a mechanism for joint actions and joint decision-making for project issues that are best tackled at scale.
- Keep the Council, NHS Grampian and MIJB appraised of developments.
- Delegate work to and advise updates from lead officers.
- Consider Scottish Government legislation and guidance on health and social care scheme of delegation.
- Consider and keep under review whether further dedicated resources are required to support the programme of transition.
- Approve the project plan prior to its submission to the Council, NHS Grampian and MIJB.

3. Membership
The Board will be chaired by Chief Officer for Health and Social Care Moray

Core members of the group will be:

- Chief Officer HSCM
- Head of Children and Families and Justice Social Work
- Chief Executive, Moray Council
- Chief Executive, NHS Grampian
- Head of Services HSCM / CSWO
- CFO HSCM
- MC Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance
- MC Head of Financial Services

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- Others by invitation

4. Quorum
The meeting will be considered quorate if there is at least 1 representative from:
NHS Grampian
Moray Council
Health & Social Care Moray
Legal representation

5. Meetings
The Programme board will meet on a 6-8 weekly cycle.
Papers will be circulated 1 week before meeting, unless by exception and agreed with Chair of meeting in advance.

6. Accountability
The programme board has the right to report to their respective governing structure. Ultimately the accountability for the delegation of services rests jointly with all parties in agreement, the Moray Council, NHS Grampian and MIJB. Final sign off will be sort from Scottish Ministers.
Head of Children and Families and Justice Social Work, with project management support are together responsible for developing and delivering the project plan.

7. Resources
The Programme Board will draw down on the resources of the MC and NHSG as first resort, with any further requirement for resources to be agreed by the Programme Board. Officers working on this project are currently funded within existing resources.

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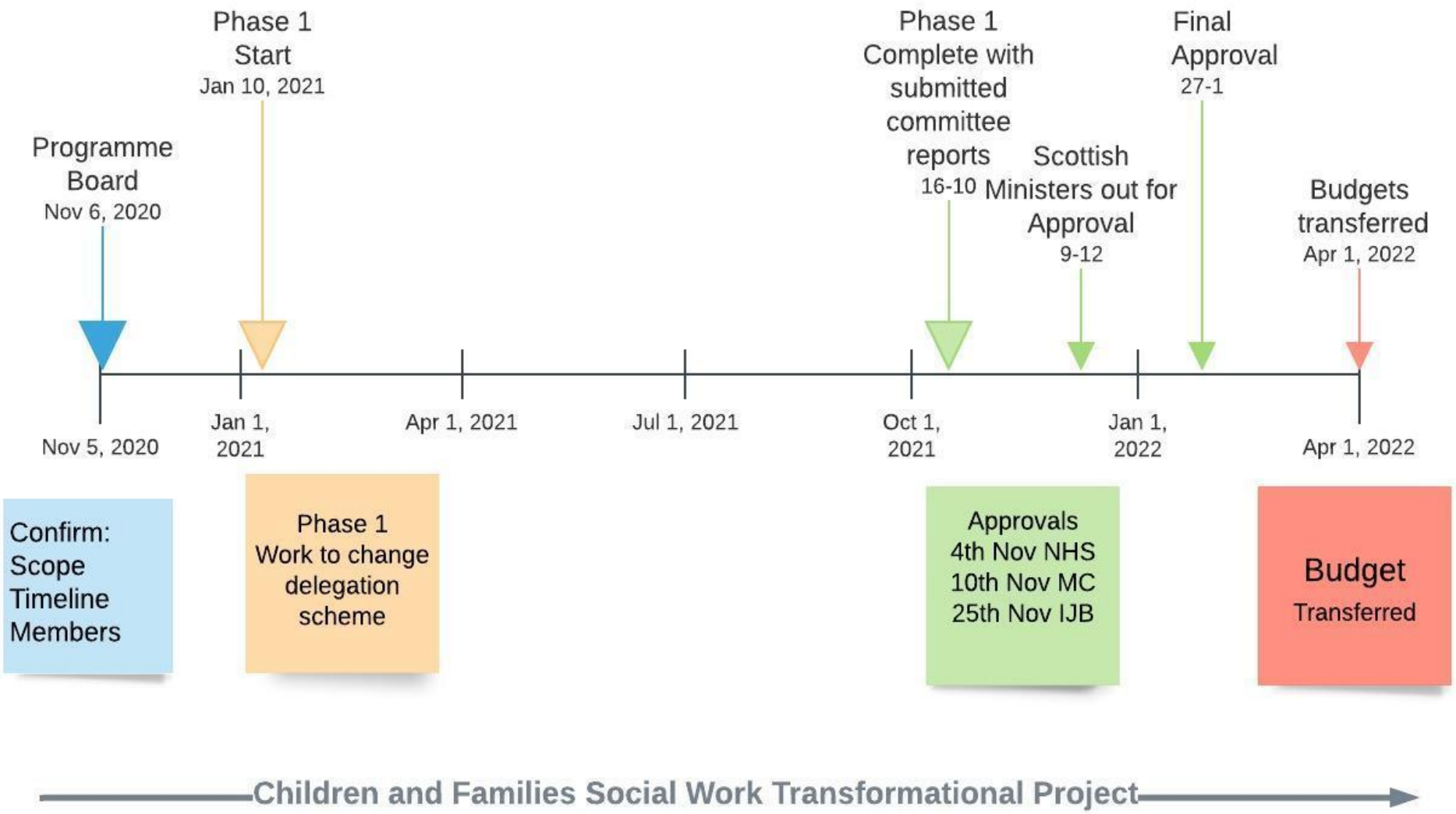
Programme Board
Nov 6, 2020
Phase 1 Start
Jan 10, 2021
Phase 1 Complete with submitted committee reports
16-10
Scottish Ministers out for Approval
9-12
Final Approval
27-1
Budgets transferred
Apr 1, 2022
Nov 5, 2020
Jan 1, 2021
Apr 1, 2021
Jul 1, 2021
Oct 1, 2021
Jan 1, 2022
Apr 1, 2022
Confirm: Scope Timeline Members
Phase 1 Work to change delegation scheme
Approvals 4th Nov NHS 10th Nov MC 25th Nov IJB
Budget Transferred
Children and Families Social Work Transformational Project