

Corporate Plan >2023: First Year Progress

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Our Corporate Plan is the Council's primary statement of what we aim to achieve for the area and the resources that we require to do this.
- 1.2 Our Plan sets out our vision: To make life better for everyone in Moray, where there is a positive future for all, within a vibrant economy, with empowered and connected communities.
- 1.3 It sets out our values: "To be ambitious, to be fair, to be responsive and to improve"

And our priorities:

- Provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence.
- Ensure caring and healthy communities.
- Promote economic development and growth and maintain and promote Moray's landscape and biodiversity.
- Work towards a financially stable council that provides valued services to our communities.

2. PROGRESS

- 2.1 Progress against these priorities during the first year of our plan is summarised below.

PRIORITY 1: Provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence

- Short, medium and long term plans for affordable, sustainable school estate aiming for equity and excellence.
 - A fair curriculum offer including through e-learning across schools.
 - Improved attainment at both the broad General Education and Senior Phase
 - Sustainable models of leadership and staff development for schools.
 - Improved support arrangements for schools and associated school groups to allow head teachers to be leaders of learning.
- 2.2 To ensure our school estate is affordable and sustainable, our Associated School Groups have been reviewed under the Schools for the Future policy. From this, a Learning Estate Strategy that includes recommendations for how our school estate should look in the future has been drafted. Work on this is ongoing with related policies being updated.

- 2.3 The curricular offer in our schools has been improved and extended through partnership work with the engagement team, Moray College UHI, DYW Moray and Skills Development Scotland (SDS). In all schools we have provision for courses at SCQF levels 2-7, covering National Progression Awards, Skills for Work Courses and National Qualifications while Moray College UHI now also provide a range of courses from SCQF 4-7 through their outreach delivery programme. E-learning has been used to deliver and support teaching input with a bespoke partnership with e-Sgoil. A strategic group is now in place to support further development in this area.
- 2.4 Partnership events have been held for teaching staff covering career education and work place standards while opportunities for workplace/industry accreditation for pupils have been improved through initiatives such as Career Ready, Meaningful May and Foundation Apprenticeships. Positive Destination data has already shown sustained improvement in most localities.
- 2.5 Work to improve attainment continues within both General Education and the Senior Phase. Early stage literacy and targeted interventions have improved due to involvement with the Northern Alliance Emerging Literacy workstream. In addition, practitioners from 25 identified schools were trained in Strategies for Early Arithmetical Learning (SEAL) that focuses on identifying gaps in learning and the intervention skills to use to raise attainment. In the Senior Phase, collaborative working on curriculum offers, learner pathways and supporting learners is beginning to have positive impact while some schools are using the flexibility of the 33-period week to provide universal and targeted literacy and numeracy interventions supported by PEF initiatives. Schools now also make better use of data including the 'Moray Tracker' spreadsheet, recently identified as an area of good practice by Education Scotland. This tracker provides the opportunities for staff to analyse groups and cohorts and identify appropriate universal and targeted interventions.
- 2.6 A recent Education Scotland thematic review found that the authority provided a number of opportunities for Head Teachers to be empowered in staffing, budget and curriculum planning while several recent school inspections have found leadership to be very good. The authority continues to work with Education Scotland and Northern Alliance networks to promote and share opportunities to improve leadership further. Quality Improvement Officers support and challenge improvement in our associated school groups and as part of the improvement agenda, a proposal has been put forward to consider a campus leadership approach for a more sustainable leadership model for the future.

PRIORITY 2: Ensure caring and healthy communities

- We are more successful in developing a shared understanding between the council and communities that help us to design the future together.
- More of our activities, services and plans are influenced by the communities they serve.

- Our communities' ability to address their own needs and aspirations is improved.
- 2.7 Our Community Engagement Strategy in line with the aims of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015) has provided the focus to ensure we have worked with our local communities and partners effectively.
 - 2.8 We successfully involved our communities in the work to develop the Moray Local Development Plan 2020. Through a specific Communications Plan we identified that working with a wider audience and in particular with younger people was a priority. As a result we built on previous work and involved local schools to create short films that helped convey key messages and issues. We made better use of social media and interactive visuals at exhibitions and we distributed information to thousands of households. Final evaluation of the process showed we successfully reached our key stakeholders and engaged with people of all ages across Moray, receiving hundreds of comments that could be incorporated into the work being undertaken on the future of Moray.
 - 2.9 As part of the LOIP process, we chose two areas to pilot Locality Plans; New Elgin East and Buckie Central East. These plans aim to encourage partnership working in the community by identifying local priorities and actions. Development work involved significant engagement activity including 18 drop in events and the leafleting of thousands of homes. This work resulted in a number of new volunteers becoming involved, over 800 conversations with local people and 275 returned questionnaires, all of which highlighted the issues that mattered most to those living in each area. Using this information Locality Plans, with distinct proposals and outcome measures for each community, have now been finalised and will be launched by the end of summer 2019.
 - 2.10 In line with the requirements of the Community Learning & Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013, we worked with partners and communities to secure the delivery of CLD activity in the area and our plan for 2018-2021, submitted to the Scottish Government, focuses on 5 themed improvement areas that were identified through this work.
 - 2.11 Community Asset Transfers provide communities with the opportunity to drive change and achieve their goals by owning and controlling local land and buildings. To help with this, we have supported a number of local groups prepare bids for the transfer of facilities. During 2018/19, the former Abbeylands Primary School was successfully transferred to the aviation museum Morayvia while transfers were approved for Marine Park in Lossiemouth and the Portknockie Bowling Green and Tennis Court. Interim leases have also been agreed for Buckie's Fisherman's Hall, Cullen Community & Residential Centre, Dufftown Community Centre, Elgin Town Hall, Findochty Town Hall, Forres Town Hall (the Mechanics Institute), and Keith's Longmore Hall.

PRIORITY 3: Promote economic development and growth and maintain and promote Moray's landscape and biodiversity

- There is sufficient housing and employment land to support growth.
- The right development happens in the right place.
- There is sufficient good quality, affordable housing to meet the needs of people living in or requiring housing in Moray.
- Our road network remains above the Scottish average for the next five years.
- Businesses grow and skills improve.
- The working age population rises.
- The gender pay gap reduces and wage levels rise.
- Productivity rises and GDP increases.
- Recognition of Moray increases.

- 2.12 Data from the latest Housing Land Audit for Moray has identified an effective housing land supply of 7.8 years, against a minimum target of 5 years, with an established housing land supply of 23 years. The Employment Land Audit identifies the availability of 79.84 Hectares of marketable/effective employment land supply of which 39.5 Hectares of employment land is available immediately. Issues have been identified in these audits such as limited choice across a number of settlements including a shortage of supply in Forres and Speyside. We will aim to address these concerns through the Local Development Plan 2020.
- 2.13 Our planning process ensures the right developments go ahead in the right place. All applications are assessed in accordance with the policies of the Local Development Plan and there is a 96% approval rating.
- 2.14 Our new build housing programme has delivered over 500 housing units since 2011 with 68 completed in 2018/19. 28 are expected for completion during 2019/20 with a further 102 planned for 2020/21. Housing Association completions have been minimal in the last 3 years with the exception of Hanover Housing, who have recently completed 2 x 30 unit extra care/very sheltered developments in the last 2 years as well as 16 general needs units.
- 2.15 Despite the work undertaken so far, providing appropriate social housing continues to be a priority in Moray. Latest housing waiting lists remain at approximately 3,500 households and the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment, undertaken in 2017 and covering housing of all tenures, identified a shortfall of 417 affordable housing units per year for 5 years.
- 2.16 Our new Local Housing Strategy for 2019-24 aims to address this and significant investment from the Scottish Government, Moray Council and other locally operating Housing Associations has been confirmed within our Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018. We have also recently implemented a revised Allocations Policy that aims to increase availability by reducing the issue of under occupancy.

- 2.17 Our latest RCI % figures are now increasing against each of our road classification types which suggests we will likely be at or below the mid table position at the end of the 5 year period. Deterioration in A class roads is particularly significant. Despite this, Moray's overall road network, a combination of "A", "B", "C" and "Unclassified" roads is still ranked 4th overall in the 2017-19 RCI results. This is mainly due to our unclassified roads remaining stable in the RCI % figures.
- 2.18 Progress has been made with the Moray Skills Investment Plan that aims to align course provision and skills pathways to local employer needs. Business Gateway has continued to provide advice, support and training to many SME's in Moray including the 132 new start ups in 2018/19. The three year survival rate of recent new start-ups has been 87% with Moray performing well compared to other Local Authorities in this respect.
- 2.19 The Moray Economic Strategy has been reviewed and relaunched with some key activities around skills and pathways to employment, talent attraction and business growth and inward investment. The MyMoray branding and website has been developed to showcase Moray and provide a gateway for talent recruitment linking with the regional and national offers. Although the working age population of Moray has declined by 0.7% in the last three years, this is a trend reflected across Scotland as a whole where a decline of 0.5% has been recorded.
- 2.20 Between 2015 and 2018, wage levels in Moray have risen by 7.4%, slightly more than the 6.8% rise recorded for Scotland as a whole. During the same period, gross weekly pay for female workers has increased at a greater rate than for male workers with a 13.1% increase compared to 5.5%. Despite these increases, gaps still remain to be addressed with the average gross weekly wage in Scotland £35.50 (6.3%) above that of Moray while female workers in the area are still paid on average £97.10 (17.1%) less than men. Activities associated with the Growth Deal and Moray Economic Strategy will help to move the economy to a more automated processes and higher skilled jobs over time which aims to help rebalance the gender pay issues and pay gaps.
- 2.21 On 11 July 2019, it was confirmed that The Moray Growth Deal would see an investment of £65 million to fund targeted economic development activity across a range of themes in the area including infrastructure, transport, tourism, energy and skills. The successful delivery of this deal aims to transform the Moray economy by creating high value jobs, safeguarding the local economy and strengthening communities.
- 2.22 Raising the profile of Moray is a priority for all partners involved in delivering economic growth for the area. As stated previously, the development of the My Moray branding along with associated website and social media presence has allowed the many reasons to live, work, invest or visit Moray to be showcased. This work is complimented by Moray Speyside Tourism and the Moray Chamber of Commerce who regularly promote Moray as a tourism destination and a key location for international trade. The recent

announcement of the confirmed Moray Growth Deal and all the work undertaken to achieve this will also have raised the profile of the area.

3. Work towards a financially stable council that provides valued services to our communities

- Reducing the funding gap.
- Positive management of workforce reduction and change.
- Improved employee engagement.
- Increase in online business.
- Improving digital provision in schools.

3.1 To help reduce the funding gap, our budget for 2019/20 included £9.7m recurring savings, considerably more than agreed for 2018/19 (£5.6M) and we reduced our use of reserves from £4.6m to £2.6m.

3.2 By working to agreed council policy and procedures, we have worked to minimise the implications to our workforce from these budget saving proposals. We have achieved the required reduction in headcount through increased use of voluntary exit channels and the continued use of redeployment where possible through Transform.

3.3 Employee engagement and workforce culture activity has continued including support provided to specific departments, development work on workload management and initial work on a mental health plan. The 2019 employee opinion survey is currently being prepared which will provide an up to date measure of engagement across the workforce.

3.4 The move to online services has continued with more than 80 council services now available for residents to access 24/7 online. These include applying for a garden waste permit, registering for school and nursery places, viewing and accepting council house offers, school payments including school meals, booking leisure classes and council tax e-billing. We now have 11,000 registered account holders. 70% of all garden waste permits were applied and paid for online; 100% of all sports development sessions in 2019 have been booked online and 80% of all primary schools meals are paid for online.

3.5 Work to improve our digital provision in schools has also continued with year 3 of our 5 year programme completed within anticipated timescales and budget in 2018/19. This has included the installation of 115 interactive panels, installation of 301 PCs, 176 laptops and 173 monitors to 51 schools. Surveys were completed to determine where new Wi-Fi aerials were required with cabling work now complete and 64% of these new aerials installed. The remainder are scheduled for installation as part of the 2019/20 programme of work.