



REPORT TO: SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 18 DECEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: MORAY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020- MORAY LOCAL LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS REVIEW- FINAL REPORT

BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report summarises the representations received in response to the Moray Local Landscape Designations Review that was issued for public consultation for a six week period which proposes a series of new candidate Special Landscape Areas (cSLA's).
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (E) (2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the Review and Preparation of Strategic and Local Plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) agree the proposed responses provided to the comments received to the public consultation, as set out in Appendix 1;**
- ii) agree that the proposed Special Landscape Area (SLA) designations replace the current Areas Of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), Coastal Protection Zone (CPZ) and Pluscarden Area of Special Control, and be incorporated into the Proposed Moray Local Development Plan 2020; and**
- iii) delegate authority to the Head of Development Services to make the changes to the final version of the report based on the recommendations set out in Appendix 1.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) requires Local Authorities to identify and protect locally designated areas and to clearly explain the reasons for their designation. Local landscape designations are regarded as a valuable tool in the Development Plan, reflecting the values that communities attach to their local place and the valuable social, economic and environmental asset they provide.
- 3.2 A blank canvas review of all Moray's landscapes was undertaken supported by a Steering Group consisting of a commissioned landscape expert, Moray Council planners, the Regional Archaeologist and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) staff. The aim of the review is to identify SLA's, their reason for designation and to rationalise the number of landscape related designations for inclusion in the Proposed MLDP 2020.

4. **CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 At a meeting of this Committee on 18 September 2018 the Committee agreed to the content of the Moray Local Landscape Designations Review – Draft Report and for it to be issued for consultation (paragraph 12 of the minute refers).
- 4.2 The draft report was issued for consultation for a 6 week period with a closing date of 2 November 2018. The consultation was advertised through press releases, direct mailing to consultees and community groups, social media, and a drop in exhibition event was held in Elgin.

5. **REPRESENTATIONS**

- 5.1 In response to the public consultation, comments were received from members of the public, community councils, community groups, as well as key consultees such as Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Historic Environment Scotland (HES), and the Woodland Trust. **Appendix 1** summarises all the representations made to the Moray Landscape Designation Review and sets out the Council's response.
- 5.2 The main issues arising from the consultation are as follows;
- **Key consultees** – Strong level of support for the Landscape Review and candidate SLA's. SNH and HES view the review as being a valuable resource to sensitively manage development and promote an understanding of what proposals could be accommodated in SLA's without compromising key landscape qualities.
 - **Burghead to Lossiemouth SLA** – This cSLA generated the largest number of comments. Strong level of support from the local community with 16 supportive comments and a petition of support with 182 signatures. A detailed response to the proposed cSLA boundary was submitted by Springfield Properties which included a suggested boundary change. Copies of this response can be made available on request.
 - **General comments** – Overall general support for the review from members of the public, community councils, and community groups.

Several comments were made on specific SLA's which have been addressed in **Appendix 1**.

- A number of new boundaries and alterations were suggested such as extending the Spey Valley SLA to include Milltown of Edinvillie and designating SLA's at the Knock of Braemoray and the Cabrach. Some changes were supported as per paragraph 6.1 of this report and others were not as is explained in **Appendix 1**.

6. NEXT STEPS

6.1 Following the consultation further refinement has been made to several of the cSLA boundaries. The changes made are;

- **Cullen to Burghead** – Boundary extended to follow Burghead settlement boundary and included Local Development Plan designations at Clarkly Hill;
- **Burghead to Lossie** – Boundary amended to exclude Burghead following the settlement boundary;
- **Portgordon to Cullen** – Boundary amended at Buckie to include Yardie Conservation Area, boundary amended to follow Findochty settlement boundary, and boundary amended at Bogside/Bin of Cullen to follow minor road;
- **Lower Spey & Gordon Castle**– Boundary amended tighter to River Spey in north; and
- **Spey Valley – Map A** - Boundary amended to include Fochabers and abut to Lower Spey & Gordon Castle SLA, and boundary amended at Rothes to include remaining areas of settlement; **Map B** – Boundary amended to follow Archiestown settlement boundary to north, and boundary extended to include Edinvillie and abut to Ben Rinnes SLA.

6.2 If approved by this Committee, the cSLA's will be incorporated into the Proposed Local Development Plan 2020 which is subject to a separate report to this Committee. SLA's will replace the current AGLV, CPZ, and Pluscarden Special Area of Control to rationalise the existing suite of environmental designations. The candidate SLA's at Quarrywood, Spynie, and Cluny Hill will form part of the Countryside Around Towns (CAT) designation around Elgin and Forres respectively.

6.3 The policy framework supporting the type of development acceptable within the SLA's will be set out in the Proposed MLDP 2020 when reported elsewhere on the agenda for this special meeting.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

SLA's will be an important designation, safeguarding Moray's outstanding landscapes from inappropriate development. Moray's quality of environment is a vital aspect of supporting and facilitating the Council's priority for economic growth, attracting investment and visitors.

(b) Policy and Legal

SLA designations will form part of the statutory LDP.

(c) Financial implications

Commissioning expert landscape advice to identify candidate SLA's has cost £10,000. The cost has been minimised as Council officers have carried out field work, digital mapping and graphics work on the project. The project has also been supported through considerable expert input by working in partnership with the Regional Archaeologist and staff from SNH.

(d) Risk Implications

The current AGLV designation continues to fail to achieve its objectives to safeguard Moray's most special landscapes from inappropriate development, which brings a high level of risk.

The new SLA designation with supporting policy reduces risk of Moray's landscape quality being eroded.

(e) Staffing Implications

Work on identifying SLA's forms part of the review of the MLDP and has been undertaken within current staffing, with expert advice procured as required.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

None.

(h) Consultations

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

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Moray Local Landscape Designations Review was subject to a 6 week public consultation. All representations received and the Council's responses are set out in Appendix 1;**
- 8.2 The candidate SLA's will be incorporated into the Proposed MLDP 2020 and will replace the existing CPZ, AGLV, and Pluscarden Area of Special Control Designations.**

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Background Papers:
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