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**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 11 JUNE 2019**

**SUBJECT: MORAY EMPLOYMENT LAND AUDIT 2019**

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the key findings of the Moray Employment Land Audit 2019 and ask the Committee to agree the Moray Employment Land Audit 2019.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (3) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to matters relating to industrial and commercial development.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree to note:
- (i) the employment land supply in Moray, as summarised in Section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report; and
  - (ii) that the Moray Employment Land Audit 2019 at Appendix 2 has been agreed by the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 21 May 2019.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) requires that the supply of marketable employment sites be regularly reviewed. The aim is to ensure there is sufficient supply of land to meet current and anticipated market requirements. SPP requires Planning Authorities to ensure that there is a range and choice of marketable sites and locations for businesses allocated in the Local Development Plan (LDP). The levels of effective/marketable employment land and take up of land are National Headline Indicators returned annually in the Planning Performance Framework to the Scottish Government.

- 3.2 The Employment Land Audit has three key functions:-
- To demonstrate the availability of a range and choice of marketable employment sites;
  - To provide an overview of the supply and availability of employment land across Moray Council area; and
  - To provide an evidence base for the monitoring and review of policies and proposals within the LDP.
- 3.3 Previous audits have been used as part of the evidence base for identifying the employment land requirements in the Main Issues Report which was explored in more detail in the associated Topic Paper.
- 3.4 The draft audit was sent to internal and external consultees and comments invited by 2 April 2019. Comments were received from the Council's Estates Service with updates on availability of sites in Keith. Comments were received from the Council's Transportation service noting planning consent on one site was due to lapse. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Scottish Water advised they had reviewed the draft but had no specific comments. In preparing the draft, sites have also been discussed with HIE and the Council's Estates Manager.
- 3.5 The audit includes four categories of land supply.

**Established Land Supply** – this includes all undeveloped land allocated for industrial/business/employment use in the adopted LDP or land that has a valid planning approval for these uses.

**Marketable/Effective Land Supply** – this is land that as well as meeting business requirements, has a secure planning status, can be serviced within 5 years, and is accessible by walking, cycling and public transport as defined in SPP.

**Constrained Land Supply** – this is land that is not considered developable within 5 years due to issues such as planning difficulties, ownership issues, infrastructure provision and physical constraints.

**Immediately Available Land Supply** – this land has planning permission, is serviced and has no major constraints to immediate development.

## 4. **FINDINGS**

- 4.1 The 2018 audit identifies that as of 1 January 2019 there was 153.4 hectares of land (net) within the Established Land Supply. This is a decrease of 0.91 hectares since 2018 due to several sites being built out and also a windfall site at Thomshill being removed as planning consent has now lapsed. The emphasis on employment land continues to be within Elgin, Forres and Buckie with more limited supply in Keith and Speyside.
- 4.2 79.84 hectares of land (net) across 15 sites is classed as Marketable/Effective. This is a decrease of 0.43 hectares and two sites since

2018. This is due to construction completed at March Road SE (I3) Buckie, land under construction at Chanonry Elgin (I2), completion of a windfall site at West Whins Findhorn, occupation of yard space at Waterford Forres (I3) and occupation of yard space at Rothes Back Burn (I1). The distribution of Marketable/Effective reflects the settlement hierarchy within the LDP, however there is a shortage of general industrial land in Forres and Speyside. The audit highlights that whilst there is a reasonable area available the number and choice of sites across all settlements is limited.

- 4.3 New employment sites have been identified in the Proposed Moray Local Development Plan to meet future requirements. These include new sites at Burnside of Birnie Elgin, land to the west of Mosstodloch, land to the south of Forres Enterprise Park, further land to the east of Westerton Road Keith, land at Greens of Rothes and a small area of land at Speyview Aberlour. These are not included within the audit as their planning status is still subject to Examination of the Proposed Plan.
- 4.4 The amount of land Immediately Available is 39.15 hectares (net) across 6 sites. This is an increase of 21.2 hectares compared to 2018; and an increase in the number of sites by one. This is due to servicing of sites at Barmuckity Elgin (I7) and at March Road SE Buckie (I3). However, there continues to be a shortage in the number of immediately available sites.
- 4.5 72.54 hectares (net) across 17 sites is classed as constrained. This means around 47% of the Established Supply has some form of constraint that is likely to prevent the land being developed in the next five years. A large proportion of this land is constrained due to ownership; this could be where the owners are unwilling to sell or are seeking alternative uses with higher land values. Part of the constrained supply is also made up of parts of sites that have physical constraints for example parts of sites that flood or have steep topography. Some sites have infrastructure constraints identified and this usually relates to achieving safe and suitable access to the site and the costs associated with this. The constrained supply has decreased by 1.58 hectares. This is due to parts of Linkwood East Elgin (I6) becoming effective and removal of a windfall site at Thomshill where consent has now lapsed.
- 4.6 1.29 hectares of land was developed in the year to 1 January 2019. This includes completion or occupation of sites at March Road SE/Rathven Industrial Estate (I3), Grampian Furnishers at Linkwood East (I6), yard space occupied at Waterford (I3), yard space occupied at Back Burn (I1) Rothes) and completion of buildings at West Whins Findhorn. This is slightly lower than 2018 (1.6ha in 2018). At 1 January 2019 there was 2.55 hectares of land under construction. This is an increase in construction compared to 2.31 hectares in 2018. The sites under construction include sites at Glen Moray Distillery Elgin, at Waterford Forres (I3), land at Chanonry Elgin (I2), and land at Linkwood East Elgin (I6). However it is noted that these figures do not represent all building activity, and is only that on designated sites or windfall sites that are not restricted to a single user. Other notable areas of activity primarily relate to expansion proposals of existing businesses, sites in the countryside and expansion of distilleries. For example new bonded warehouses at Glenfarclas, Benromach, Tamdhu and Malcolmburn, and an

office and workshop at Drumbain Farm Rothes. It also does not reflect any redevelopment of existing units.

- 4.7 A summary of the key findings and commentary on supply in settlements is attached at **Appendix 1**. A copy of the full audit is available at **Appendix 2**.

## **5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

The Employment Land Audit is a key part of monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the LDP, which delivers Corporate and Community Planning objectives. Ensuring sufficient provision of effective employment land supports economic growth by providing opportunities for new or expanding businesses.

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

The preparation of the annual Employment Land Audit is a requirement of SPP to monitor the effectiveness of the LDP and ensure an effective supply of employment land is maintained.

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

None

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

None

### **(e) Staffing Implications**

Preparation of the annual Employment Land Audit is part of the workload of the Planning and Development section.

### **(f) Property**

The Employment Land Audit includes industrial estates and sites owned by the Council. The Council Estates section was consulted on the draft audit in March/ April.

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

An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the report is to inform the Committee on monitoring of land supply.

### **(h) Consultations**

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

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 SPP requires that the supply of marketable employment sites be regularly reviewed to ensure there is sufficient supply of land to meet current and anticipated market requirements. Levels of marketable employment land and take up are National Headline Indicators submitted within the Planning Performance Framework.**
- 6.2 The Employment Land Audit 2019 identifies that there is 79.84 hectares (net) of marketable/effective employment land, of which 39.15 hectares (net) is immediately available. Issues are identified with the restricted choice of sites across settlements and shortage of industrial land in Forres and Speyside.**
- 6.3 Committee is asked to note the key findings of the Employment Land Audit 2019 and that the Employment Land Audit 2019 was agreed by the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 21 May 2019.**

Author of Report: Rowena MacDougall (Planning Officer)  
Background Papers:  
Ref: