

January
2018



Shaping
Moray

moray
council



Jim Grant, Head of Development Services

Dear Colleagues

I've worked in local government for 36 years and in that time we have gone through changes and economic downturns. The determination of staff to provide the best service despite the challenges, often goes unnoticed by the general public.

I'm privileged to have a great team of Planning, Building Standards, Trading Standards and Environmental Health Officers working in this section. On a day-to-day basis they show professionalism and commitment.

We're not immune to cuts, increased workload and demand. The majority of the work we do is preventative, designed to protect public health and safety, improve quality of life, protect the environment and ultimately reduce service demand across the whole public sector.

As we face another year of significant cutbacks, one aspect of our work that offers a way to reduce service demand is the Local Development Plan main issues report –

which is currently out for consultation. I'd encourage you all to take a look on our website: www.moray.gov.uk/mainissuesreport.

Picture your service in 10 years' time and think about things like:

- ☞ Should urban design cater for dementia with more character and use of colours?
- ☞ Could our community areas be designed to help combat loneliness?
- ☞ Would the internet in every household allow people to stay in their homes longer?
- ☞ How can drainage schemes encourage biodiversity?
- ☞ Do we need more allotments for healthy living?

These are just a few examples of the things we have to consider, but no one knows the possibilities for your service better than you – tell us what can be done to improve the communities we build and make the public sector more effective and efficient.

Our Economic Development team

provide direct business support through business gateway, deliver regeneration projects and support local events. Over the next year the work for a Moray Growth Deal will intensify as we try and get Government support for major projects in Moray.

They also provide support for council services to access external funding, so if you're delivering a project that could benefit from external funding, please contact the team to see if they can help. Bringing in external funding will be an important aspect of maintaining service delivery.

Of course I can't write about my team without mentioning the 'engine room' of Development Services – the admin staff without whom we'd rapidly grind to a halt! They're a critical part of our service and often don't get the recognition they deserve.

Lastly, I hope you all had a great Christmas, and wish you all the best for what will be a challenging new year.

Jim

Editorial

Happy New Year and welcome to January's *Connect* - we just about made it! Sorry it's a bit late arriving, bit of a rush to get it written up over the last week but we hope you still enjoy it.

That perfectly formed team in planning and development are featured, and with good reason. They are tasked with looking into the crystal ball to predict the growth of our towns and villages, and suggest areas for development, areas that must be protected against building, and look at infrastructure that will be needed to service the growth.

The finished development plan has to last at least five years and will probably guide Moray's growth well into the next decade and beyond.

But for now it's at the consultation stage, so do get along to one of the exhibitions in your patch and have a look at what might be built on your doorstep. Once the plan is approved, it'll be too late to have your say.

Team Connect

Peter Jones
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Sharon Dunbar
MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Angus McNicholl
DESIGNER





Shaping Moray

Ever thought about how the planning system has shaped the environment we live, work and spend our leisure time in? While our historic environment has been shaped by our ancestors and predecessors, our future built environment will be shaped by the council's next Local Development Plan, developed by a small team in HQ.

Surrounded by maps, plans and demographic data, Emma, Gary, Rowena, Jane, Hilda, Eily, Darren, Keith, Kevin and Trevor produce an updated blueprint for the area's development every five years. And, as the needs of the population change, technology develops and our understanding of what makes a good place to live improves, the pace of the team's work increases.

Principal planning officer, Gary Templeton, says the remit gets bigger with every new local plan.

"While it may be easy to see the obvious impacts of planning such as new housing developments and business parks, planning now has a much wider remit," he said.

"We have to help co-ordinate future infrastructure requirements and recognise the role planning can have in the prevention of certain things, such as isolation and crime.

"Access to services and facilities, such as broadband, transport hubs and open spaces are all factored in to the proposed plan we consult on."

The Local Development Plan will identify sites throughout Moray for housing and employment purposes, as well as safeguarding green spaces, historic buildings and conservation areas. It will also set out a series of policies which are used by planners and councillors to assess planning applications.

Work started on the current draft almost as soon as the last one was approved. The team need to gather information from a wide range of sources, such as NHS, the business community, the MoD, community organisations and developers to build up a realistic view of what's needed to take Moray to the next stage of development – and keep it attractive for residents and incoming businesses.

The new Plan will have a strong focus on better place-making, jargon used to describe well designed places. Good place-making can encourage good social interaction, foster a sense of community and care, encourage physical activity and mental wellbeing and reduce crime.

The team have been discussing with NHS Grampian staff the health and wellbeing issues which the plan can promote, including providing more accessible housing to meet the needs of our ageing population, provision of superfast broadband to all new homes (unless technically unfeasible) with the future-proofing potential for dedicated NHS lines for online consultations with your GP. Development must also incorporate new parks to encourage healthy exercise, and quiet areas for rest and reflection.

Emma Gordon, planning officer, reckons the plan can help support some council services.

“One in 11 early deaths could be avoided and £900 million could be saved nationally every year if everyone met recommended levels of exercise, such as walking for 20 minutes daily,” she said.

“As long as planning ensures new developments are well designed to encourage activity then it can support aims such as these.”

The first stage in preparing the new plan has been to publish the Main Issues Report for public consultation. This happens between 08 January and 30 March, and everyone living in Moray – including our colleagues – should have their say, says Emma.

There’s a series of drop in public exhibitions planned, including a special drop in exhibition for council staff on Friday 12th January in the training rooms at the back of the Annexe building between 10.30am and 3.00pm.

The team need to consult and engage with as wide an audience as possible during this vital consultation period, with a particular emphasis upon involving young people.

Senior planning officer, Eily Webster, said: *“The Scottish Government are really keen for authorities to include young people in consultations such as this, and we have a few projects planned with primary and secondary schools, and Moray College. To bring the impact of planning alive we have touch screens and interactive mapping technology at exhibitions. People can use these to easily see how development would impact on their local area.”*

Provision of employment land is also a key challenge.

Planning officer, Rowena MacDougall, said: *“There is a real shortage of effective employment land in most of Moray’s towns and it is proposed to identify several large new sites in Elgin, Forres and Mosstodloch to meet future needs from new and existing businesses.*

“This could attract new

commercial investment, and help the expansion plans of existing companies”.

Co-ordinating future infrastructure needs to support the development identified in the development plan is a real challenge.

Hilda Puskas, developer obligations officer, said the plan has to be good enough to start conversations about what the impact of new development is on local services and facilities such as schools, health centres and the local road network.

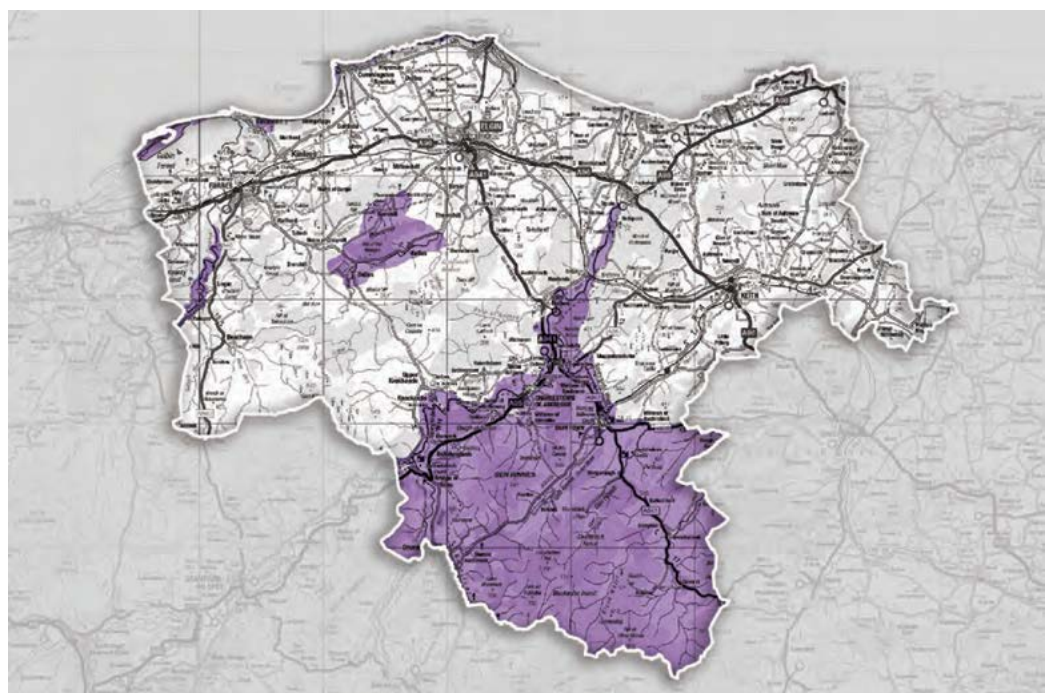
“The plan proposes new health centres in Keith, Elgin and Fochabers and extensions to existing health centres in Forres and Buckie,” she said.

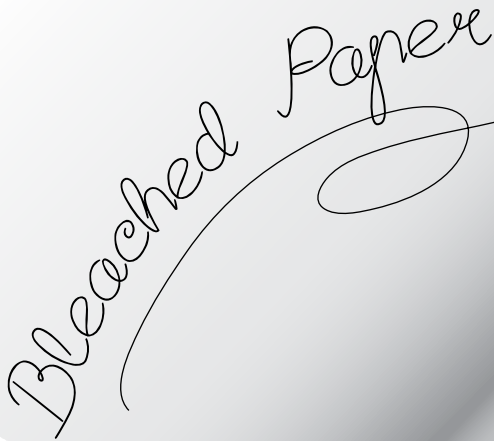
“New school sites are also identified in the plan to meet future need, and traffic studies are being undertaken to identify improvements required by developments.”

While these issues are all about development, the plan will also aim to maintain and enhance the outstanding environment we enjoy in Moray.

It’s all about promoting good quality design in both urban and rural areas, biodiversity in new developments and quality greenspaces, as well as encouraging small scale renewable energy on all new houses and commercial buildings.

If you are a member of a community group can you help raise awareness of the Plan and encourage people to get involved. The team’s work is available at: www.moray.gov.uk/mainissuesreport.





Bleached Paper

Paper is bleached using chlorine dioxide, which accounts for over 80% of the world production of bleached pulp. Waste and emissions from the pulp and paper industry include liquid and solid wastes, air emissions and wastewater. Air emissions include sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxides. Wastewater released into the environment include chlorinated compounds and phosphates. This wastewater affects aquatic life that lives within and nearby the treatment plants. Paper mills also produce non-hazardous sludge which goes to landfill.

Bleached paper is also expensive at £8.50 a box; £1.35 more than unbleached paper. If all of our paper usage was on white paper that would equate to £9k more per year.

But there is an alternative...

For a few years now we and other public bodies have encouraged the use of unbleached paper. It has a slightly grey colour but meets all our needs in terms of text legibility, charts and formal letters. Anyone that gets letters from we will have noticed the paper isn't brilliant white. The only downside is that some colours are not as bright as on bleached paper.

We can't achieve 100% usage as our needs vary. Currently 60% of the paper we use is bleached, meaning we are contributing to environmental damage somewhere on the planet. Two years ago we were achieving 60% use of unbleached paper. We need to get back to using more unbleached paper. In NHS Grampian 75% of their paper is unbleached. We should have no problem beating our previous results and matching that.

It will save money, which can be used elsewhere where, when cash is tight. So your New Year resolution is – Save the planet, save the money – use unbleached!

Although we aim to be a paperless organisation, we still use a lot of paper. We print thousands of leaflets, letters, posters and reports every year, and this gets through 6,600 boxes of paper a year – or 16.5 million sheets of paper.

While this level of paper consumption isn't an issue (but less would be good!), the majority of it is bleached, white paper. The paper we use originates from wood pulp. In order to produce high quality white paper the pulp must not discolour during storage or turn yellow under exposure to sunlight, as well as retaining its' strength. Bleaching ensures all three of these requirements are met and additionally improves absorption capacity, which removes any small pieces of bark or wood, giving a high level of purity.

Lovely, you might say – but do we need this high level of quality all of the time?

There's a price to pay for your sheet of pure white vellum, and it's not just financial. There is a huge cost to the environment.

YOUR VOICE

The year 2017 may have now come to a close, but we're still working away on last year's Employee Survey. As one year ends and another begins, it's good to sit back and reflect on all the work which has taken place, take stock of how far we've come - and make plans for 2018.

We've been making improvements over the years so that working for the Council is even better. Our employee conferences were piloted to improve the visibility of senior managers and allow frontline employees to discuss relevant issues across services. They're now a popular feature of our employee engagement calendar, alongside a range of other activities; in fact it's hard to think back to what the Council was like before these were introduced in 2006.

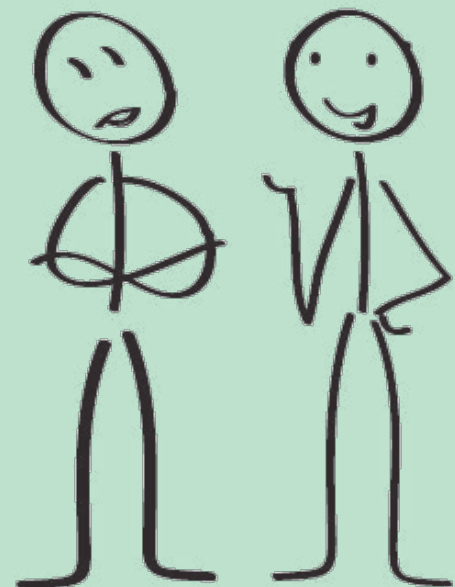
Culture is the environment that surrounds you at work all of the time, you can't see it but instead you feel it, which takes time. Here are just some of the actions since the 2015 survey:

- 🗣 working closely with services who have the lowest survey results to see where improvements need to be focussed
- 🗣 continuing employee engagement activities such as service learning visits, strategy talks, listening meetings, STAR Awards, employee conferences (lots more info on the interchange about all these initiatives!)
- 🗣 introducing a new employee engagement activity 'Back to the Floor', giving senior managers hand-on experience delivering frontline services
- 🗣 developing an employee charter; standardised induction checklist; early warning system; tackling workplace problems guide; working together for a positive workplace guide; investigation best practice guide and standardised manager job descriptors (available on the interchange)

When our Employee Survey went live last year, we analysed how things were going and identified what improvements had been made. The results showed us that there were more of you enjoying your job, being clear on your duties and responsibilities and having an awareness of the challenges that face the Council over the next few years.

We know there are areas where progress is needed, and we're committed to actions that will help develop a more open and positive working environment for all. This will include:

- 🗣 discussing survey results with managers
- 🗣 developing service specific action plans for services who have the lowest survey results
- 🗣 promoting and informing on the role of elected members
- 🗣 building on leadership, improving communications and supporting supervisory development
- 🗣 monitoring to measure progress



Cut out and keep... Icy weather bingo card

I'VE NOT SEEN A GRITTER DRIVER ALL DAY!	GOLD PLATED PENSIONS!	HAVE YOU GRITTED MY STREET?	I DEMAND A COUNCIL TAX REFUND!
	WINTERS FROM THE 1970s REFERENCE	UNCOLLECTED BINS = COLLAPSE IN LAW AND ORDER	<spelling mistake>
GRIT IS NOT MAGIC FAIRY DUST	CAN WE HAVE A GRIT BIN IN OUR STREET?		I WAS ON AN ICY ROAD AND I SKIDDED!
THANK YOU!	<random swearing>	HAVE YOU BEEN OUT GRITTING YET?	IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!

It's been a few weeks since the *Connect* team spotted this gem of a bingo card, and we're still giggling over it.

Yes it's tongue-in-cheek, but we've all heard the council-bashing moans and groans as soon as Jack Frost makes his first appearance of the winter season. We know our roads teams are doing a sterling job in what are often challenging conditions, so a big thanks from us.

Take the icy weather bingo challenge for yourself. Compete with your colleagues to see who calls 'house!' first...

A couple of special pics... from Christmas Jumper Day

Colleagues in Mosstodloch eased themselves into the Christmas spirit with their Christmas jumper day on 06 December.

PS – We're loving the handmade effort, Mike (pictured centre), ding dong!



Another fabulous effort from all the staff at Ashgrove. Environmental Protection and Roads joined forces and donated loads of items for the Moray Food Bank.

HR Noticeboard

Resolution to learn?

If your New Year's Resolution is to learn new things, we can help! The 2018 corporate training calendar is now available on interchange.

Check it out: interchange.moray.gov.uk/int_standard/Page_107448.html

Great news

We've made it to the finals of the Scottish Top Employers for Working Families Awards 2018!

This recognises our flexible and family-friendly approach to our employees.

The winner from the four finalists will be announced on 22 March, so watch this space. Whatever the outcome, we're proud of our achievement in making it this far!

A wee reminder!

of this year's public holidays (council closed):

30 March – Good Friday

7 May – May Day

25 and 26 Dec – Christmas and Boxing Day

As we start a new holiday year it's worthwhile planning some leave for the forthcoming year to make sure that you use your full entitlement. We know there was a last-minute scramble towards the end of last year to use up remaining days!

It's important to take regular breaks for health and wellbeing and planning these in advance helps services to plan continuity for service delivery.



TAKING CARE OF YOU

Fat-burning, metabolism-boosting and nutrition are all words you'd associate with 'healthier living' resolutions, but what about resilience-boosting? That's the latest from the NHS, so here's a reminder about what resilience is:

resilience

/rɪˈzɪliəns/ 

noun

1. the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.
2. the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.

Regular exercise and time to yourself are positive changes to help boost your mood and deal with any stress in your life. Taking control of your time in this way can effectively reduce stress. The NHS website has some good ideas for different types of exercise.

www.nhs.uk/livewell/getting-started-guides/pages/getting-started-guides.aspx

Choose an exercise that you enjoy. If it helps, do it with a friend or listen to music. Aim for 150 minutes a week.

For most people, the easiest way to get moving is to make activity part of everyday life, like walking or cycling instead of using the car to get around.

Choosing a well-balanced diet not only helps your physical health, but can make you feel emotionally stronger as well. You're doing something positive for yourself, which lifts your self-esteem. Aim to have a balanced diet that included all of the main food groups. The NHS has a helpful guide here.

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx



Pictured L-R are Sheila Sellar and Denise Stirling, who're both Healthpoint Advisers for NHS Grampian, Siobhan Leen, Public Health Coordinator for Health & Social Care Moray, and Jane Fordyce, HR Officer for Moray Council.



More than 70 colleagues partook in the annual 'winter warmers' event in December.

Run by our HR team and partners from NHS Grampian, it's run each year to offer advice on how to stay healthy over the festive period, let us know how many units of alcohol are in our favourite festive tipples, and offer some alcohol-free alternatives.



TIME FOR TALKING



STRUGGLING WITH DEBT?

Blue Monday is but days away (for those of us old enough, no, we don't mean the song!) January 15 has been dubbed the gloomiest day of the year, thanks to the timely combination of post-Christmas blues, cold dark nights, the arrival of unpaid credit card bills and when our good intentioned New Year's resolution start to fall by the wayside!

Of course we can struggle at any time of year and for a number of reasons, so it's reassuring to know that help is available whenever we might need it.

Timefortalking is our free, confidential 24/7 support service offering:

- ☞ telephone counselling
- ☞ face-to-face counselling
- ☞ telephone support
- ☞ live chat
- ☞ information and resources including links, podcasts and meditation exercises

0800 970 3980 (24/7, 365 days a year)

www.timefortalking.co.uk

Live chat: Enter the website, click on 'Live Chat' and enter the password [TfTnow](#)

we also have a free and confidential Money Advice Service.

[0300 123 4561](tel:03001234561)

money.advice@moray.gov.uk

Other services are also available:

National Debtline

[0808 808 4000](tel:08088084000)

www.nationaldebtline.org/S/Pages/default.aspx

StepChange Debt Charity

[0800 1381111](tel:08001381111)

www.stepchange.org/

Money Management Advice

[0300 500 5000](tel:03005005000)

www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en

Scotland's Financial Health Service

[0800 707 6696](tel:08007076696)

www.scotlandsfinancialhealthservice.gov.uk/

Citizens Advice

[01343 550088](tel:01343550088)

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/debt-and-money/

Top healthy eating tips:

- ☞ Base your meals on starchy carbohydrates
- ☞ Eat lots of fruit and veg
- ☞ Eat more fish – including a portion of oily fish
- ☞ Cut down on saturated fat and sugar
- ☞ Eat less salt – no more than 6g a day for adults
- ☞ Get active and be a healthy weight
- ☞ Don't get thirsty
- ☞ Don't skip breakfast





EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE

Delivery of the Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) expansion programme in Moray has stepped up a pace since the project team expanded at the end of 2017 to include catering and janitorial, HR and communications personnel.

The increase from 600 to 1,140 hours a year of Scottish Government funded childcare for three and four year olds (and eligible two year olds) will begin here in August 2018. This will be delivered at council and partner-provider nurseries. Childminders can also register to deliver funded hours for two year olds.

Moray is operating a phased delivery for this provision with postcode areas being used in three phases to ensure all eligible children can receive their entitlement by 2020 in a manageable way. All eligible children will remain entitled to 600 hours funded ELC until their postcode becomes eligible for 1,140 hours.

Registration opens for the phase one areas in January 2018 – these are in parts of Elgin, Forres, Lhanbryde and Buckie (full postcode details are on our website). Phase two includes more areas eligible for an August 2019 start and will be announced in February.

The increase in funded hours means parents have a more affordable opportunity to work, train and study.

We submitted our Delivery Plan for this to the Scottish Government on 29 September 2017. The plan details Moray Council's approach to the expansion and costs involved. Feedback from the Scottish Government has been very positive and we're expecting to have full details of long term funding early in 2018.

A number of parent/carer information sessions have been organised in phase one areas, information sessions for childminders and nursery staff are also planned. One-to-one meetings with parents who register for the increased hours will also take place, in order to better understand their requirements for delivery of the hours.

We're working with Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils to launch the ELC Academy – a comprehensive online tool with details of careers in Early Learning & Childcare. Alongside this we're developing closer links with employers, Moray College and other training providers to establish clear and distinguished pathways to employment within and throughout the ELC sector.

This is an extremely exciting time for early learning and childcare – recipients and providers - and Moray Council is at the forefront of developing a well-established sector here.

