

INTRODUCTION

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 provides the legal basis for the preparation and review of Structure and Local Plans. The Structure Plan, along with the Local Plan, forms the Development Plan for an area. The Plan requires to take account of guidance provided by The Scottish Executive's National Policy Guidelines and Planning Circulars.

The Moray Structure Plan

The Moray Structure Plan succeeds the Grampian Structure Plan prepared by the former Grampian Regional Council. It provides the strategic context over the next 10 to 15 years for the Moray Local Plan and for development control decisions. It will also help to guide the activities of the Council and other agencies involved within Moray.

The Written Statement is the culmination of an extensive consultation process. A series of Structure Plan Issues Papers was published by the Moray Council in July 1997. They provided a means for stimulating debate and for giving early notice of the formal consultation process on the Consultative Draft document. The Consultative Draft was subject to wide-ranging influence including written representations, public workshops, policy workshops and was made available on the internet and at public libraries.

In order to provide a more relevant basis for consultation the Moray Council has developed the Structure Plan alongside the Local Plan. The essential linkages between the two Plans have therefore been clearly set out for public scrutiny and comment.

The key elements of the Structure Plan are provided by highlighted statements in the form of strategy, policies, recommendations and proposals. Strategies are broad statements of overall direction and provide the context for policies which address matters of planning control. Recommendations are requests to other agencies and organisations to play a role in the Plan and Proposals are statements of the Council's own intentions.

The Moray Local Plan 2000

The new Moray Local Plan 2000 replaces the Moray District Local Plan 1993-98, and will remain in force for five years from the date of its adoption (26 April 2000), and then will be reviewed. The Moray Local Plan 2000 interprets the strategic direction given by the Moray Structure Plan into detailed policies for the determination of planning applications.

As well as setting out the policies by which the Council takes decisions on planning applications, the Local Plan contains proposals by which it promotes development, relating to the use of land, and premises. The Council quite separately has policy statements which include Housing (the Housing Plan); Economic Development (the Economic Strategy); and it is committed to an Environmental Charter.

The Plan attempts to be more specific about the Council's objectives by stating the Development Plan aims for each Town or Village. It attempts to be realistic about what can be achieved, and does not address issues which cannot be achieved.

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The draft version of the Local Plan which was published on 30th January 1998 was the subject of discussion, debate, community meetings/workshops and exhibitions. At the end of the consultation period the Council studied all the representations received, reconsidered the content of the plan and published a 'final approved version', in February 1999. Objections to the final version were resolved by a Public Local Inquiry which sat for three weeks in August 1999. The Council accepted all the recommendations of this Inquiry and formally resolved to adopt the Plan on 26 April 2000.