



Elgin Railway Station

## Introduction

- 5.1 An efficient transport network which provides links within Moray and connects it to external markets is essential to its long term economic and social prosperity. Increasingly, rural areas such as Moray require long distance access to suppliers and markets in the UK and Europe. At the same time, the continuing centralisation of social facilities means that it is essential to provide adequate arrangements for private and public transportation. This has taken place in a situation where national investment in major transport infrastructure, local authority capital expenditure on transport and the use of public transport have all been subject to decline.
- 5.2 The Structure Plan Strategy focuses development on settlements, thereby directing growth to accessible locations which can enhance the role of public transport. It also requires that natural resources, including energy, are used in a sensitive and efficient manner, and that sustainable forms of development and transport are promoted.
- 5.3 The approach to transportation must reflect these elements. Commuting distances and the need to travel must be reduced where possible. The use of public transport and other environmentally friendly modes of travel for passengers and freight will also be encouraged, as will accessibility to town centres.

## Approach to Transportation

- 5.4 The markets for the products from the production plants within Moray are world-wide. Whisky, food processing, primary production and manufacturing all require good links by road, rail, air and sea. The EC recognises the need to provide strategic transport links across Europe and it has identified the A96, and the A9; the Aberdeen/Inverness rail line and its connections to the Central Belt; and the airports at Inverness and Aberdeen all as part of the Trans European Network.
- 5.5 Transport in whatever form it takes does not come without costs. There are costs to the environment associated with the impact of road building. There are pollution costs arising from the running of vehicles, (between 1971 and 1991 the percentage of Moray

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TRANSPORTATION

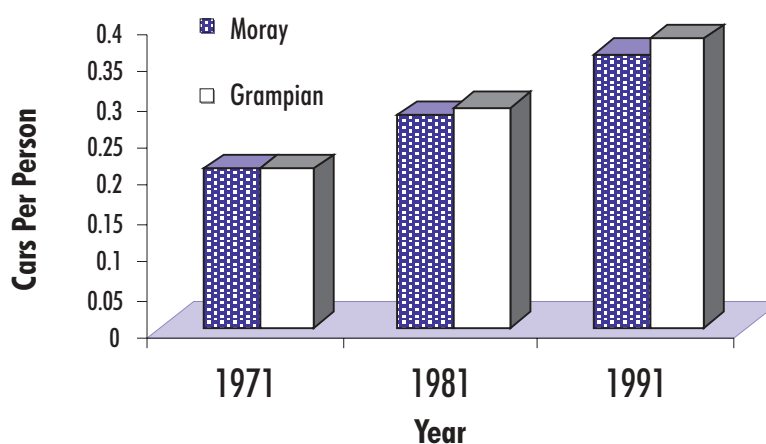


High Street, Elgin

households with cars increased from 57% to 69%). Consequently, there has been a policy shift by the EC and the Government towards reducing the overall impact of transport. There is now an emphasis on the promotion of alternatives to car travel and better linkage of development with transportation.

- 5.6 It is essential, however, that national policies designed to combat urban congestion in the Central Belt do not militate against the needs of rural areas such as Moray. Proposals to reduce travel by mechanisms such as increasing the level of fuel tax, or by setting up road tolls could have a disastrous impact upon the economic and social fabric of the area. Therefore, national policies require to be sensitive to the needs of rural areas, although the general principle of seeking to reduce travel is supported.

Figure 11: Car Ownership in Grampian and Moray



- 5.7 Around one third of Moray households, often including the elderly or disabled, have no car. Therefore, public transport still has a significant role to play. Public transport has less impact on the environment, and in populated areas maximises carrying capacity. Its effectiveness can be complemented by making more provision for cycling and walking.

5.8 The Structure Plan aims for Transport are:

- i) to enhance accessibility by:-
  - a) improving road links
  - b) promoting freight movement by sea and rail
  - c) securing adequate parking in towns
- ii) to advance sustainable transport by:-
  - a) enhancing public transport
  - b) managing traffic and traffic impact
  - c) promoting cycling and walking routes

- 5.9 The aims for transport reinforce the Plan's emphasis upon sustainable development. They provide the context for the focusing of development upon settlements and will assist in reducing the potential impact of congestion and environmental damage.

#### Update

The Council produced its Draft Local Transportation Strategy in July 1999. It is anticipated that the finalised strategy will be published in Spring 2001.

The approach to transportation is to enhance accessibility by improving transport links and services, and to promote sustainability by advancing traffic management, cycling and walking.

Policy S/T1:  
Approach  
to Transportation

## ROAD LINKS

**Aim: To enhance accessibility by improving road links**

### Trunk Roads

5.10 Trunk roads, the strategic road network linking the main towns and cities in Scotland are the responsibility of The Scottish Office. In Moray the present trunk road network consists of the A96 to Inverness and Aberdeen (linking to the A9 and A90 respectively) and the A95 from Keith to Aviemore. The A96 (along with the A9 and A90) forms the Trans European Road Network in the North East. They form part of the core route framework for Europe. The long term aim for trunk roads is to improve capacity and safety. This would support the need to dual the A96, particularly west of Fochabers. It is, however, recognised that in the short term emphasis will be on improving route capacity and safety by providing additional overtaking opportunities.



A96 at Brodie

Figure 12: Traffic Growth on Roads in Moray



5.11 Despite their national importance, there has been insufficient investment in these core routes. Within Moray the priorities for by-passing are Keith, Fochabers/Mosstodloch and Elgin. They would offer increased journey reliability, as well as safety and environmental benefits to the communities involved.

### Update

A by-pass for Fochabers/Mosstodloch has been given the go-ahead by the Scottish Executive. Construction is due to begin 2003. The Scottish Executive is also in the process of rescinding the by-pass orders for Keith.

### Recommendation S/T2: Trunk Road Improvement



A96 at Keith

### Proposal S/T3: Road Network Upgrading

### Recommendation S/T3A: Trunk Road Additions



### Policy L/T1: A96

5.12 The route improvements should be designed taking account of the 'Roads, Bridges and Traffic in the Countryside' initiative.

**The Secretary of State is recommended to enhance the trunk road network both within and to/from Moray. In particular, priority should be given to**

- i) **the dualling of the A96 Aberdeen to Inverness route, providing by-passes at Keith, Fochabers/ Mosstodloch and Elgin.**
- ii) **the improvement of the A95 Keith to Aviemore route.**

### The Road Network

5.13 The Moray Council is responsible for routes other than trunk roads. While it is important to maintain good access between all settlements and the rural areas, strategically Moray would particularly benefit from improvements to the A941, from Lossiemouth/Elgin to the A95 trunk road at Craigellachie, linking the Elgin area to the A9 and the south. The A98, which was until recently classed as a trunk road, provides an important strategic link along the north coast of Moray into North Aberdeenshire.

**The Moray Council will seek to ensure that good road access links its rural area to all of its settlements, and will give priority to the upgrading of the A941 (Lossiemouth/Elgin/ Craigellachie) and the A98 (Fochabers to Cullen).**

**It is recommended to The Scottish Executive that the A941 (Lossiemouth/Elgin/ Craigellachie) and the A98 (Fochabers/Cullen) should be included within the trunk road network.**

The proposals within the Structure Plan to upgrade the main routes (A96, A98, A941, A95) require to be taken into account within the Local Plan.

On the A96 the future potential to dual the route and the lines for by-passes at Keith, Fochabers/Mosstodloch and Elgin require reservation. On the other main routes the potential for realignment, straightening and widening should not be prejudiced by other development. The enhancement of the road links should pay due regard to sustainability and seek to minimise or mitigate any potential impact on the natural environment and avoid where possible harsh engineering and other features that might have an adverse impact.

**By-pass lines will be reserved for Keith, Fochabers/Mosstodloch and Elgin; development to the south of Alves and Brodie will be restricted. Development on new sites will not be permitted within 70m of the present carriageway of the road, outwith the settlement boundaries, and no additional vehicular access points formed. Road improvements should seek to minimise or mitigate their potential impact on the natural environment.**

**Outwith the Settlement and Rural Community boundaries, there will be a presumption against new accesses and against development on new sites within 50m of these roads, in order to allow for extensive straightening and widening opportunities. Road improvements should seek to minimise or mitigate their potential impact on the natural environment.**

The Scottish Executive has issued NPPG9: Provision of Roadside Facilities on Motorways and other Trunk Roads in Scotland. Although the Structure Plan sets an aim of promoting development accessible to transport links, it is important to maximise the use of facilities within communities on or adjacent to the trunk roads and main roads within Moray. Therefore, services should normally either be within settlements or be extensions to existing facilities. New facilities outwith settlements may be acceptable in exceptional circumstances if they are justified by likely demand, do not adversely impact on existing community facilities and meet safety and environmental criteria, and are designed to achieve an appropriate fit into the landscape.

**Roadside service stations related to existing facilities or in settlements will normally be acceptable subject to meeting the following criteria:-**

- i) Impact on the surrounding built or natural environment: there should be no adverse impact on designations relating to the built or natural environment, or prime agricultural land. In otherwise acceptable cases sensitive design and landscaping will be sought which reflects and, where necessary, upgrades the nature of the surrounding environment.**
- ii) Safety provisions: proposals will require to meet the appropriate access and parking standards related to the development. Proposals which may have a substantial impact on the road network will be required to provide Transport Assessment as part of the planning application.**

**New facilities outwith existing settlements will require to meet criteria i) and ii) above and demonstrate a specific locational need related to unmet demand.**

**The Council will require that a suitable and safe access from the public highway is provided.**

**(i) Design of Road Access**

**Since the formation of a new access by unmade track or surfaced private road (particularly in rural areas) can often result in a scar on the landscape ( e.g. if it dissects an agricultural field, involves extensive tree felling or traverses a hillside), then unless a proposed new access is carefully designed within the landscape the proposal will be unacceptable.**

**(ii) Road Access Standards**

**Where access to the site is by unmade/private track the Council may require it to be surfaced to a specified**

**Policy L/T2:  
A95/A941 and A98**

**Policy L/T3:  
Roadside Service Stations**

**Policy L/T4:  
Provision of Road Access**



**Policy L/T4:  
Provision of Road Access  
(Cont.)**



*Traffic Calming*

standard. If the access is of significant length and may serve more than one development site, some widening and the provision of passing places may additionally be imposed as a condition of any consent.

**(iii) Unmade Private Tracks**

Where a site takes access from an existing unmade private track which is outwith the ownership of the applicant and is considered to be of such a poor standard as to be unsuitable for additional vehicular traffic, the Council may consider the proposal unacceptable, unless the applicant can either:-

- a) secure ownership of the track to allow for improvements to be made to the satisfaction of the Council, or
- b) demonstrate that an appropriate agreement has been concluded with the existing owner to allow for improvements to be made to the satisfaction of the Council.

**(iv) Phasing of Road Improvements**

Where a new access roadway is to be provided the Council may require the road to be made up to a specified standard before work on the new property commences.

## SEA AND RAIL

**Aim: To enhance accessibility by promoting freight movement by sea and rail.**

### Freight

5.14 The Structure Plan encourages environmentally friendly modes of transport, and whenever possible freight to and from Moray is encouraged to use means other than road. It is important to retain the key rail head facilities at Forres, Elgin and Keith, and the commercial harbour facilities at Burghead, Lossiemouth and especially Buckie.

**The Moray Council will, whenever appropriate, promote the use of rail and sea for transportation of bulk goods. In particular, it will safeguard the existing facilities for movement of freight by sea at the harbours of Buckie, Lossiemouth and Burghead; and by rail at Keith, Elgin and Forres.**

### Rail

5.15 The railway between Aberdeen and Inverness which traverses Moray has been identified, along with the routes south, on the Trans European Rail Network. It is important for both passengers and freight that the existing network is retained and enhanced. In particular, reducing the amount of single line operation and upgrading bridges and tunnels to accommodate the latest freight initiatives on the lines should be seen as priorities. Currently, the Council is joint funding a study into the necessary improvements to the Aberdeen- Inverness railway line with a view to reducing journey times.

**Policy S/T4:  
Freight Movement  
by Sea and Rail**



*Buckie Harbour*

## Update

The Moray Council in partnership with Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils have employed a development adviser to promote rail freight.

**Passenger and freight train operating companies, Railtrack and the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising should ensure that the current rail network within Moray, and the connections via Inverness and Aberdeen to the south and Europe via the Channel Tunnel, are maintained and improved to provide fast, efficient, and co-ordinated links.**

## Operational Railway Land

The main railway line passes through the stations at Keith, Elgin and Forres and at each of these towns there are operational yards and sidings. The disused branch lines to Roseisle, Burghead and Dufftown all have potential to carry rail freight in the future and grain traffic has now been recommenced to Roseisle maltings. The principal priority is to safeguard such land as is required to develop rail freight and passenger services in line with Structure Plan policies S/T3 and S/T4, and to permit redevelopment, or alternative uses only on areas identified by Railtrack and the Office for Passenger Rail Franchising (OPRAF) as surplus.

**Areas are identified in the Town Maps of Keith, Elgin and Forres as 'operational railway land' where passenger and freight handling will be the priority use. If land is surplus to rail transport needs, it may provide opportunities for redevelopment.**

## Harbours

Of the eight harbours along the Moray coastline, five have only limited commercial use for either cargo or inshore fishing and now tend to be used for recreational purposes. Buckie has important facilities for the local fishing fleet and functions as a primarily commercial harbour. Lossiemouth and Burghead retain commercial facilities but have increasingly attracted leisure related developments.

Non-commercial harbours are best developed for leisure and tourism, and in any cases their picturesque setting should be protected from unsightly, or disruptive, business operations.

**Areas are identified in the Town Maps for 'harbour related uses' where the primary commercial function of the harbour area will be promoted; in Buckie for cargo handling, fish trading functions and the development of other industry; in Lossiemouth and Burghead commercial and leisure facilities can be accommodated; whilst in the other five harbours (Hopeman, Portgordon, Findochty, Portknockie and Cullen), the emphasis will be for leisure and tourist developments.**

**Other development proposals not directly related to the harbour use will be considered against the following criteria:-**

- i) the operational needs of the harbour.
- ii) the economic benefit of the proposal.
- iii) the infrastructure needs of the proposal.

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### Recommendation S/T5: Rail Network

### Policy L/T5: Railway Land

### Policy L/T6: Harbours



*Buckie Harbour*



*Car Park at Cooper Park, Elgin*

**Proposal S/T6:  
Parking Supply**

**Policy L/T7:  
Parking Standards**

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## PARKING

### **Aim: To enhance accessibility by securing adequate parking in towns**

- 5.16 There is a need for the main shopping and commercial towns to provide good facilities for car parking especially for shoppers and visitors which may require some restraint on commuter parking. This will assist in retaining retail expenditure (and jobs) within the area which is currently under strong pressure from Inverness and Aberdeen.
- 5.17 The need for suitably located long-stay and short-stay parking spaces within towns will be monitored, together with charging levels. In general, new car parking will be related to demand and to schemes for traffic relief and pedestrian priority.
- 5.18 Parking supply and parking charges take account of trends in car ownership, car use and traffic patterns, but can also be used to encourage alternatives to the car in urban areas.
- 5.19 Developments in urban areas are sometimes unable to provide adequate parking provision due to the nature of the building or site. In appropriate circumstances, where the development makes a positive contribution to the surrounding environment, the developer will instead be required to contribute to the provision of parking elsewhere in the area or towards public transport infrastructure (including for cyclists and pedestrians).

**The Council will seek to ease accessibility to towns in Moray, by ensuring an appropriate supply of car parking spaces within towns for shopping and visitors. The Council will seek to restrain long term commuting parking in urban centres. To assist this process the Council will produce and monitor standards, including where appropriate, provision, at developer's expense, of parking spaces as required by the provision of the Transport Assessment in support of the development for use within development control.**

The Council will monitor and update its car parking standards and policies for commuted payment for parking in relation to development. They will be applied through the development control process.

**Proposals for different forms of development must comply with the Council's 'Car Parking Standards' (available from the Council's Roads Service).**

**Where development (including housing) within the defined town centre cannot reasonably supply parking on site, (or where it is appropriate not to include parking), the developer will require to comply with the Council's system for 'commuted payments' for parking. Housing development in town centres which need not provide residential parking on site, must make provision for vehicular access for deliveries and emergencies. In housing developments of over 30 houses, provision must be made for communal off-street parking, in addition to in-curtilage in order to permit the parking of large commercial vehicles away from road frontages.**

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

### **Aim: To advance sustainable transport by enhancing public transport**

5.20 Public Transport is vital to those without access to a car to maintain their opportunities and quality of life. The Council requires to work in partnership to help deliver reliable public transport services within the scope of its available resources. The planning process can help in this by seeking to ensure that necessary land and infrastructure is safeguarded for public transport.

5.21 Bus operators are free to operate services in response to market demand. However, the Council has the power to support routes which would otherwise not be viable. It has set minimum service levels related to settlement size, based on reasonable walking distances.

**The Council will seek to maintain and enhance public transport services within the guidelines set for financial support.**

In order to promote bus and train services, strategic operational land should be safeguarded.

**Development that could prejudice the operation of bus and rail services, and associated facilities, will not generally be permitted. Bus terminals and railway stations are protected by designations (TSP) in the relevant Town Statements.**



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**Proposal S/T7:  
Public Transport Support**

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**L/T8:  
Public Transport Operations**



Mid Street, Keith

**Proposal S/T8:  
Traffic Management**

## TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

### **Aim: To advance sustainable transport by managing traffic and traffic impact**

5.22 There is scope to develop an approach to transportation that takes account of the development priorities of the Plan. There is an opportunity to develop the linkages between home, businesses, social and leisure facilities which make the most of the potential for public transport, cycling and walking. This will be focused in and around the main towns of the area where the provision of bus services, cycleways and footpaths is justified by the potential usage. Within these and other town centres there is further scope to introduce measures to support increased traffic management, and pedestrian priority and safety.

**In promoting sustainable transport objectives, the Council will ensure an integrated approach to the management of traffic, public transport, alternative and safe routes for cycling and walking, and mitigating the impact of traffic on the environment.**

**The Council will promote pedestrian priority schemes in town centres where:**

- i) there is support from the local community**
- ii) provision can be made for adequate diversion of traffic**
- iii) provision can be made for reasonable vehicle servicing of businesses**
- iv) provision can be made for pedestrian safety on roads liable to take increased traffic.**

### **Transport Assessment**

Transport assessments will be provided by developers where their proposals are likely to generate traffic which has a significant impact (see Policy S/IMP2). These will often require to be provided in association with retail impact assessments or environmental assessments.

**Where a transport assessment identifies necessary off-site improvements for the development to be able to proceed the developer will be expected to fund them by entering into a formal agreement with the Council. In addition to normal developments this will also apply to situations such as the need to upgrade off-site infrastructure related to forestry planting or harvesting.**

**L/T9:  
Transport  
Impact Mitigation**

## CYCLING AND WALKING ROUTES

**Aim: To advance sustainable transport by promoting cycling and walking routes.**

- 5.23 Government targets are to double the level of cycling by 2002 and again by 2012. To achieve this a more strategic approach will be required in the context of route delivery and ensuring improved links with land use and development within settlements.
- 5.24 In Moray a high proportion of journeys to work (48%) are of less than 2 km. This situation is similar for journeys related to shops, community facilities, sport and recreation. Considerable opportunity therefore exists to promote cycle usage and reduce car journeys with the resultant environmental and health benefits. Such usage will only be achieved through provision of safe routes that offer alternatives to cycling on busy roads or through cycle provision being interpreted as part of traffic management/calming proposals.
- 5.25 The opportunities to provide cycle related tourism and resultant economic benefits must be realised. Developments such as the proposed Aberdeen to Inverness National Cycle Route, due to commence in Moray in 1998, will help to capitalise on this largely untapped market.
- 5.26 The provision of a cycle strategy should help to pull these various strands together with clearly stated targets and objectives to facilitate partnerships and funding opportunities. An opportunity exists to integrate a cycling strategy with the co-ordinated approach to countryside access promoted by Policy S/CF3. It is intended to develop this approach to formal and informal path/cycle route development as the 'Moray Access Network Initiative'.

### Update

The Council has approved a draft Access Strategy for public consultation (December 2000).

**The Moray Council will promote a Cycling Strategy incorporating:**

- i) support of network and facilities development including the proposed Aberdeen to Inverness National Cycle Route, other local routes and initiatives.**
- ii) greater integration between development, and cycling and walking routes.**

The Cycling Strategy referred to in the Structure Plan (S/T9), promotes a comprehensive and integrated cycle network that meets the needs of local communities. New development should accommodate provision for cycling as an effective means of transport within built-up areas.

Considerable improvements are still required to improve safety for cyclists, particularly within the main towns.



*Forres - Kinloss cycle path*

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**Policy S/T9:  
Cycling Strategy**

*Elgin High Street*



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