

Moray Growth Deal update

April - June 2025

Project updates

Bus Revolution project, m.connect on demand public transport services

The Bus Revolution project continues to enhance public transport access for Moray's rural communities. The m.connect service, launched in 2023, entered its phase two expansion in May 2025, building on the success of earlier improvements.



Key developments in Q2 (April-June 2025):

- **Phase two launch (May 2025):** the addition of two new service routes, one connecting communities in Burghead, Hopeman and Cummington to Lossiemouth and the second offering enhanced travel opportunities in the heart of Elgin. The introduction of a weekend 'on-demand' bus service in Buckie has also been introduced.
- **New vehicles and infrastructure:** fully accessible buses and electric vehicle charging points have been added to support a more inclusive and sustainable network.
- **Timetabled services in Speyside:** in June 2025, new bus services were introduced in the Speyside area, enhancing connectivity for communities with regular, reliable public transport options, the expanded service now covers more rural areas with longer operating hours and improved connectivity to scheduled bus and rail services.

- Marketing campaign: a new awareness campaign launched in June to promote the expanded m.connect offering, helping residents understand what's available and how to use the service.
- Look forward to the Speyside on-demand service operating on Saturdays between 1000-2200hrs, with connections into Elgin from July 2025.

The project continues to evolve based on local feedback and travel needs. For full details on the m.connect service, including how to book and plan a journey, visit the [Moray Council website](#).

Business Enterprise (BE) Hub

The BE Hub project is close to entering delivery, with the team working to finalise the last remaining contractual and financial conditions. Designed as a collaborative space for entrepreneurs, students, and local businesses, the Hub will play a central role in the [South Street regeneration project](#) in Elgin.

Key updates for April-June 2025:

- Confirmation from the Elgin Neighbourhood Board that they will provide capital (£150k) and revenue (£600k) funding for the project.
- UHI Moray and Robertsons Property Ltd are working to finalise contractual details around funding.

It is expected that these steps will be complete in the coming weeks which will enable the project to transition into delivery, commencing the construction phase.

Once complete, the BE Hub will offer flexible spaces for business support, innovation, and collaboration, helping to create new opportunities for enterprise development, skills training, and economic growth in the heart of Elgin.

Project updates

Cultural Quarter

The Cultural Quarter project continues to make progress, with two landmark developments, Elgin Town Hall and Grant Lodge. This project is central to efforts to revitalise Elgin's historic city centre and enhance Moray's cultural offering.

Elgin Town Hall

- The construction tender for Elgin Town Hall, launched in March 2025, closed in June. The outcome is currently being assessed, and more details will be shared in the next update.
- In preparation for construction, SSEN will be carrying out works this summer to install below ground infrastructure, ensuring the site is ready for the redevelopment.
- Subject to final approvals, construction is expected to begin by autumn 2025, with the project aiming to enhance performance space, accessibility, and community use.



Grant Lodge

- Concept designs for the rejuvenation of Grant Lodge have been developed with input from key community stakeholders. The plans aim to transform this important heritage site into a beautifully restored heritage venue and modern cultural destination that meets the needs of today's residents and visitors.
- Throughout 2025, work will continue to refine the plans and prepare external funding applications, with planning submissions anticipated in the second half of the year.

Together, these two projects aim to celebrate and preserve Elgin's architectural heritage while creating new spaces for arts, culture, and tourism, making the Cultural Quarter a vibrant destination for residents and visitors alike.

Digital Health

The Digital Health & Care Innovation Centre's work in Moray continues to progress, with a focus on real-world testing of new digital solutions to improve health and care services across the region. Key updates this quarter include:

- The Living Lab programme is actively engaging with citizens and professionals to test digital tools that help manage long-term conditions, support independent living, and improve access to mental health services.
- Living Lab 4 continues to make significant progress, including exploring the potential for expanding the current Moray Lifelines Service into more of a predictive technology-enabled care service. This will be tested over the next six months in the Buckie area.
- As the project enters its final 12 months of delivery, a formal review is scheduled for June 2025 to assess progress and ensure the Rural Centre of Excellence (RCE) is meeting the economic targets set out for it.
- The RCE continues to work closely with citizens, health and care providers, academia and education providers, wider public sector services, and industry, to ensure that the innovations being trialled are grounded in lived experience and have the potential for wider rollout.

If you're interested in supporting the project or learning more about the digital health solutions being developed in Moray, visit the [RCE website](#).



Early Years STEM

The Early Years STEM project is now in delivery and aims to inspire a love of science, technology, engineering, and maths (STEM) among Moray's youngest learners. By enhancing learning environments and outreach, the project will help build a stronger future talent pipeline across the region.

Key developments in Q2 (April–June 2025):

- **Construction started:** in May 2025, Robertson Construction was appointed to deliver the first Early Years STEM Discovery Centre and Community Learning Hub, which will be located within Elgin Library at Cooper Park. Construction is now underway.



- **STEM vehicle delivered:** a mobile outreach vehicle designed to bring engaging STEM experiences directly to schools across Moray has been delivered and is currently being fitted out. Once operational, it will help expand the project's reach to rural and remote communities.
- **Supporting resources:** work is ongoing to develop outreach materials for schools, ensuring educators across Moray can access quality STEM learning tools aligned with the new Discovery Centre.

This project represents a significant investment in early years education, aiming to nurture curiosity and creativity from a young age and equip children with skills for the future.

Housing Mix Delivery

The Housing Mix Delivery project continues to make steady progress across multiple development sites. The aim is to create a diverse range of high-quality homes in both town centre and rural locations, supporting sustainable communities throughout Moray.

Key developments in Q2 (April–June 2025):

- **South Street, Elgin:** above-ground enabling works were completed in May 2025 and ground-level archaeological investigations are now underway. Construction is expected to begin by the end of August 2025, in partnership with UHI Moray and Robertson Property Ltd, as part of the wider South Street regeneration.
- **Dallas Dhu, Forres:** planning permission was granted in March 2025 for phase one of this development, designed by Fraser/Livingstone Architects.
- **Speyview, Aberlour:** construction of 39 affordable homes, in partnership with Springfield Properties, began in December 2024 and is progressing well. Phase one is expected to be completed by spring 2026.
- **Lochyhill, Forres:** the Housing Mix Delivery project is designed to help unlock sites that are difficult to develop but important for the future of Moray's communities. Lochyhill in Forres is one of these sites. It has the potential to deliver over 1,000 new homes, which are much needed in the area, but it also presents some complex challenges. The project team is working closely with developers to help bring this site forward, and discussions are ongoing. More updates will be shared as progress continues.
- **Hillside Farm, Dufftown:** Moray Council and the Dufftown & District Community Council are preparing a revised masterplan for this site. Further details to be shared once the new plan is finalised.

This project is central to shaping the future of housing in Moray, helping to meet demand for both affordable and private homes, while contributing to the regeneration of key areas like Elgin town centre.

Project updates

Skills and innovation intervention, formerly the MAATIC project

The Skills and Innovation project is being reshaped to better reflect current needs and opportunities in Moray. Following the withdrawal of the original MAATIC proposal in 2024, a new vision is being developed to ensure the Growth Deal delivers lasting impact in skills development and economic growth.

- A series of workshops involving local employers, public agencies, education providers, and community representatives concluded earlier this year to explore future options for a revised skills project.
- A new skills intervention proposal has now been developed based on this feedback and analysis by the Growth Deal Team.
- The proposal is currently under review and will be considered by Moray Council in autumn 2025.

If approved, the revised project will aim to equip people in Moray with the high-value skills needed by key employers, supporting inclusive economic growth and addressing long-term workforce challenges in the region.

MICM

The Manufacturing Innovation Centre Moray (MICM) is progressing well and will provide a hub for innovation, support, advice, and collaboration within the region's manufacturing sector. The centre will support local businesses to adopt new technologies, improve productivity, and drive sustainable growth. Key developments for the quarter include:

- Construction is underway following the appointment of Morrison Construction in late 2024. Work is progressing on phase one of the facility, which includes flexible business space for business start-up incubation and existing businesses to undertake innovation projects, alongside a manufacturing demonstrator suite showcasing advanced technology and equipment.
- A process is currently underway to appoint an experienced service operator who will manage and deliver the MICM service.

Once operational, MICM will serve as a catalyst for innovation in Moray's manufacturing sector, helping local businesses scale up, access new markets, and adopt cutting-edge practices and technologies.



Visual - Manufacturing Innovation Centre Moray (MICM) - Graham and Sibbald

Priorities for the next quarter (July to September 2025)

As we move into the next quarter, several exciting milestones are expected across the Moray Growth Deal. Here's what to look out for:

- ▶ **Construction to begin at South Street in Elgin, part of the South Street Regeneration.**
- ▶ **Elgin Town Hall redevelopment to get underway, with a construction contractor expected to be confirmed and on-site activity beginning.**
- ▶ **Expanded m.connect bus services (launched in spring) will continue to be promoted, with monitoring underway to help shape future improvements.**
- ▶ **Decision expected on the new Skills & Innovation project, setting out how the Deal will support local people to develop the skills needed by key employers.**
- ▶ **Progress toward appointing a service operator for the Manufacturing Innovation Centre for Moray (MICM), ensuring it's ready to open and deliver support for local businesses.**
- ▶ **STEM Discovery Centre construction continues in Elgin Library, with the outreach vehicle also being prepared for launch.**

You can view our previous Quarterly update for January to March 2025 and keep up to date on all the projects via the [My Moray website](#).