

**VISIT**  
**MORAY**  
**SPEYSIDE**



# UNLOCKING OUR REGION'S POTENTIAL

Visit Moray Speyside Business Plan

[MORAYSPEYSIDE.COM](https://www.morayspeyside.com)

1 Apr 2025 – 31 Mar 2030

'Business' or variations of the word 'business' are used throughout this document. The word 'business' in this context refers to tenants and occupiers of properties who are liable to pay the non-domestic rate (NDR), whether they pay business rates or not.

This includes all properties listed on the Scottish Assessors Association Portal (saa.gov.uk) with a non-domestic rateable value, many of whom may be a charitable organisation, public sector organization, social enterprise or community group who may not consider themselves to be a business.



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## WHAT IS A BID AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A Business Improvement District (BID), or in the case of Visit Moray Speyside, a Tourism Business Improvement District (Tourism BID), is a private sector-led initiative where businesses within a clearly defined geographical area collaborate, invest, and collectively deliver projects that will positively impact their area over an agreed period (typically no more than five years).

The funds raised are ring-fenced for Visit Moray Speyside to deliver the projects and services outlined in the Business Plan. A Tourism BID for Moray ensures that all beneficiaries also contribute to the initiative's success.

In January 2020, businesses in the Moray area voted for the establishment of the Visit Moray Speyside Tourism BID. BIDs have consistently proven to be a successful economic model for enhancing the fortunes of businesses, tourism, and the economy. The development of BIDs is now a key part of the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy, with 35 operational BIDs in Scotland and a further 20 under development.

There are currently 27 operational BIDs in their second or third terms, reflecting 50 successful renewal ballots. This demonstrates that businesses value the projects and services delivered by BIDs.

A YES vote for the Visit Moray Speyside Tourism BID at the renewal ballot in March 2025 is essential for the Moray area to remain competitive with other tourism destinations, continue to improve the quality of the visitor experience, and enhance the value of tourism to the local economy.

For more information on BIDs, please visit: [scotlandstowns.org](http://scotlandstowns.org)

# 27

THERE ARE CURRENTLY 27 OPERATIONAL BIDS IN THEIR SECOND OR THIRD TERMS, REFLECTING 50 SUCCESSFUL RENEWAL BALLOTS.

# FORWARD

## FROM OUR CEO

I am pleased to present this Business Plan which outlines the priorities identified by Moray's tourism sector; provides an insight into our plans to work together to continue building Moray Speyside as a premier destination.

A Tourism BID enables tourism businesses within a designated area to collectively invest in initiatives that will benefit not only their own operations but the broader region as well. The primary aim of Visit Moray Speyside is to support the region's tourism businesses, boost visitor numbers, and increase the volume and value of tourism to the Moray Speyside economy.

Supporting Visit Moray Speyside presents a unique opportunity to collaborate and implement the changes we all desire. Through the BID, we can access external resources and funding that would otherwise be unavailable to individual businesses.

All proposed initiatives stem from ideas and suggestions gathered during our consultations, surveys, and business engagements. Every tourism business in the area has had the opportunity to express their priorities.

By backing Visit Moray Speyside, we can work together to increase visitor numbers, attract investment, and secure the future of tourism in our region. For more information, please visit our website at [morayspeyside.com](http://morayspeyside.com) or refer to [improvementdistricts.scot](http://improvementdistricts.scot) for more general or national details.

A notice of ballot will be sent to all eligible persons no later than 6 Feb 2025, along with the ballot papers. Eligible voters will have six weeks to cast their vote before the ballot closes at 5pm on 20 Mar 2025. Ballot papers received after this deadline will be deemed null and void.

By voting YES to Visit Moray Speyside, you will help to continue to shape the next chapter for tourism in Moray Speyside — one that will enable the area to flourish as a world-class tourism destination for years to come and secure the future of tourism in our remarkable region.



**Gemma Cruickshank**  
Chief Executive, Visit Moray Speyside

## FROM OUR BOARD

As we look ahead, the Board of Directors of Visit Moray Speyside are focused on the critical role our organisation will play in shaping the future of our region's tourism and hospitality industry. In an ever-evolving market, our commitment to driving effective marketing strategies and being the voice of the industry is more important than ever.

Our organisation serves as the central hub for promoting the region, advocating for the needs of the industry, and ensuring that our local businesses and attractions are visible on both the national and international stage. We are dedicated to amplifying the unique stories and experiences that make our destination stand out, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and driving sustainable growth that benefits the entire community.

However, it is crucial to recognise what would be lost if our organisation were not here. Without Visit Moray Speyside, the region would face significant challenges in maintaining its competitive edge. The unified voice that coordinates marketing efforts that attract visitors, advocates for industry needs, and offers support during times of crisis would all be diminished. Local businesses would lose a key partner in navigating the complexities of the tourism landscape, and our region's ability to compete with other destinations would be severely impacted.

As we embark on the next steps for our future, we remain steadfast in our mission to promote our region with passion and purpose, champion the industry, and ensure that Visit Moray Speyside continues to be an indispensable resource for the community. Together, we will build a vibrant and resilient future for tourism in our region.

**Board of Directors**  
Visit Moray Speyside

## OUR TEAM



**Gemma Cruickshank**  
Chief Executive



**David Wilson**  
Marketing and Development Manager

## OUR BOARD



**Edward Tennant**  
Interim Chairman,  
Innes House



**Stewart Fotheringham**  
Vice Chair,  
Creegan Talent



**Esther Green**  
The Macallan Estate



**Ian Chapman**  
Gordon & MacPhail



**James Creane-Smith**  
Speyside Cottages



**Oliver Lyon**  
Speyside Gardens  
Caravan Park



**Steven Milne**  
Elgin Golf Club

# TOURISM IN MORAY

Visit Moray Speyside has been operating since April 2020 and its predecessor Moray Speyside Tourism had been operating since 2014. In essence, our role is to enhance the value of tourism to the Moray economy while providing support to the tourism businesses within our region.

The annual value of tourism to Moray has grown by more than £50 million over the past six years, reaching over £185 million in 2023.

## £186m

ANNUAL VALUE OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN MORAY IN 2023\*

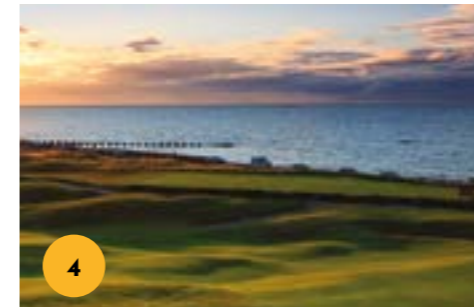
## 2,904

TOURISM JOBS IN 2023\*

## 877,000

ANNUAL VISITORS IN 2023, INCREASING BY MORE THAN 100,000\*

\*Figures are from STEAM, Annual Summary & Economic Impact Statistics. Previous tourism data can be found at [morayspeyside.com/visitorstatistics](https://morayspeyside.com/visitorstatistics).



## HERE'S JUST A GLIMPSE OF THE WORK WE'VE BEEN DOING...

### 1 REPRESENTING OUR REGION

In recent years, Visit Moray Speyside has proudly taken the lead in representing our region at major industry events such as VisitScotland Connect, ITB Berlin, and the UKInbound Annual Convention. These platforms have placed Moray Speyside at the forefront of Scottish tourism.

### 2 A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND EVENT

In partnership with UKInbound, the trade association for inbound tour operators, Visit Moray Speyside organised the first-ever structured travel trade buyer-to-supplier event and familiarisation trip to the region in 2023. This milestone saw more than 15 buyers from some of Europe's most renowned travel companies visit and experience what our region has to offer.

### 3 GIVING PEOPLE A TASTE OF MORAY

In the same year, we also launched the Taste of Moray Speyside campaign, designed to highlight the region's diverse culinary offerings with over 100 businesses engaging in the campaign. This included a dedicated website featuring a food trail, as well as themed events like Restaurant Week, Cocktail Week, and Farm to Fork experiences.

### 4 INTRODUCING THE GOLF PASS

2024 saw the introduction of the Moray Speyside Golf Pass – our region's first ever. The Golf Pass is a collaborative initiative designed to promote the wealth of outstanding golf courses we have in Moray Speyside, offering both locals and visitors an affordable and accessible way to enjoy multiple courses. This initiative strengthens our region's position as a destination for golfing enthusiasts, further showcasing the breadth of experiences available in the area.

### 5 GENERATING COVERAGE

Over the past five years, we have also hosted more than 50 bloggers and social media influencers, arranged trips for numerous journalists, and generated over £200,000 worth of press and media coverage for the region. Our efforts have even secured a temporary reprieve to prevent the closure of public toilets in the region. Additionally, we've supported local initiatives, assisted with funding applications, and much more – all with the aim of bolstering our region's tourism industry.

Find out more about Visit Moray Speyside at: [MORAYSPEYSIDE.COM](https://MORAYSPEYSIDE.COM)

# 2020 - 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS



“ Tourism is recognised as a key growth sector in Moray Speyside, with the potential to further contribute to its economic expansion.

In its first five-year term, Visit Moray Speyside has successfully demonstrated the important role it plays in supporting the tourism sector in the region and growing its value - helping to create jobs and sustain communities.

Within one of the most turbulent and challenging periods for the industry, Visit Moray Speyside has consistently provided strong leadership and a clear voice for the sector. Through its destination marketing activity, it has helped to further establish a destination brand for the region, which continues to build momentum in the marketplace. This is reflected in the sector's return to growth and the increased visitor numbers and spend seen in recent years.

A further five-year term will not only ensure that these firm foundations are built upon but will also provide the opportunity to harness the tourism potential that new investment across the region will provide. ”



David Jackson,  
VisitScotland Regional  
Director for Moray Speyside

## 2020

Visit Moray Speyside (VMS) began operations on 1 Apr 2020 during a challenging period. Despite this, the organisation worked to support local tourism businesses, helping over 50 businesses secure COVID-related funding, often exceeding expectations and bringing in over £550,000 to the local economy through grant funding.

In collaboration with the Moray Chamber of Commerce, VMS introduced the Check & Protect app in the summer of 2020, ahead of the official Scottish Government app. This allowed businesses to record customer details securely during the pandemic.

VMS became a key resource for local businesses and residents by sharing crucial COVID-19 updates and guidance. The organisation's efforts not only helped manage pandemic challenges but also contributed to the recovery of the local tourism sector.

VMS secured £61,750 of funding from the three rounds of Scotland's Town Partnership BID Resilience Funding which supported VMS to deliver a three-phased recovery plan focused on Support/Stabilise/Revive. The funding provided VMS with the ability to support members through the pandemic, market the region through SKY TV, digital marketing and a radio campaign targeting other Scottish cities and North-east England during the time when travelling within the UK opened again.

## 2021

VMS secured £350,000 from Highlands & Islands Enterprise to support a three-year tourism recovery initiative. This funding was directed towards important areas such as food and drink, agritourism, education, sustainability, and tourism networks.

Additionally, VMS obtained £45,000 from the SSE Beatrice Windfarm Fund to assist community groups with Community Asset Transfers of public toilets, ensuring their refurbishment and ongoing maintenance.

VMS also received £75,000 from the VisitScotland Growth Fund to launch the 'STOP, BREATHE, GO' campaign, promoting the region's outdoor spaces, especially during a time when indoor activities were restricted.

## 2022

In May 2022, VMS hosted its annual Tourism Conference, with nearly 100 local businesses in attendance. The event provided valuable opportunities for networking and learning.

June saw the launch of the Toilet Toolkit, a community-focused initiative aimed at upgrading public restroom facilities. A local community group was awarded £5,000 for refurbishing women's toilets, demonstrating the impact of this scheme.

In September, VMS expanded its tourism networks with the creation of a dedicated group for Speyside, fostering collaboration within the industry. October brought the introduction of Eyebright Utilities, a free service for VMS members to help reduce energy costs, leading to savings of around £20,000.

## 2023

VMS also launched its first Travel Trade Guide in Feb 2023, promoting the region to the international market, and participated in the ITB event in Berlin. In Mar 2023, VMS introduced Green Resource Packs to help businesses advance their sustainability efforts.

In Apr 2023, VMS attended VisitScotland Connect in Aberdeen, generating international interest in the Moray and Speyside region. In May, the annual Tourism Conference brought together over 100 businesses for a day of workshops and expert presentations.

June saw the launch of the 'Taste of Moray Speyside' Food & Drink Trail, showcasing local produce and dining experiences through a dedicated website and social media campaign.

VMS also supported over 50 businesses with their Short-Term Licensing applications and invested in travel trade workshops to help businesses engage with the sector. A familiarisation visit in 2023 saw 13 UK tour operators explore local hotels and attractions, fostering connections between operators and businesses.

## 2024

Between Jan and Sep 2024, VMS focused on media and blogger visits to promote the region. Whisky journalist Emma Gibbs provided extensive coverage of local distilleries, boosting the region's appeal to whisky enthusiasts.

The first Moray Speyside Cocktail Week in February 2024 generated interest through collaborations with bloggers and media outlets. In March, the annual Tourism Conference once again attracted over 100 local businesses, offering opportunities for collaboration and development.

In addition, VMS hosted influential bloggers such as Laurie Goodlad, highlighting family-friendly attractions, and Graham Johncock, whose heritage blog explored the area's rich history. The 'Farm to Fork' initiative celebrated local produce and culinary traditions, while cycling enthusiast Markus Stitz captured the region's outdoor beauty in a video documenting his journey along the Speyside Way and Moray Coast.

In August, luxury lifestyle blogger, My Pretty Chapters explored the region's high-end accommodations and experiences, and in September, wellness bloggers The Roamies promoted Moray Speyside as a destination for relaxation and rejuvenation. Overall, these media and blogger visits have strengthened the region's position as a must-visit destination in Scotland.

Visit Moray Speyside (VMS) has been instrumental in supporting the local tourism sector through initiatives and funding, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2020 to 2024, VMS assisted businesses with funding applications, developed campaigns to promote outdoor tourism, launched community-driven projects like the Toilet Toolkit, and facilitated networking through annual tourism conferences.

# CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Visit Moray Speyside Renewal campaign was officially launched at the Visit Moray Speyside Annual Conference on 14 Mar 2024.

## AIM

The overall aim of the consultation was to assess business opinion on ways to enhance and improve Visit Moray Speyside. The results of these surveys and consultations have been combined and form the basis of the Visit Moray Speyside Business Plan and BID Proposal.

## PROCESS

A renewal survey was undertaken, seven consultation groups and a series of one-to-one meetings. The survey generated 32 responses.

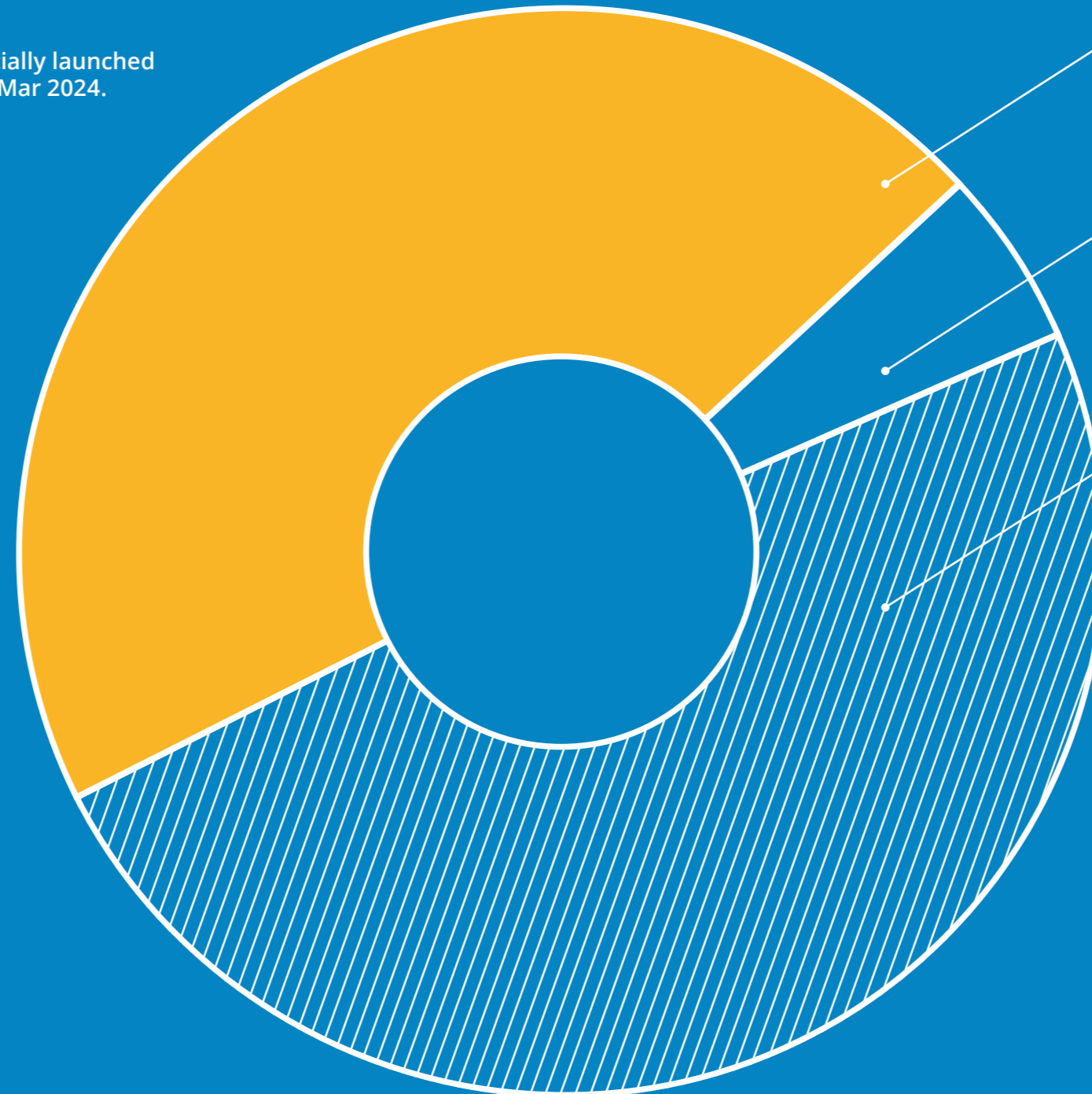
The survey was sent via email to 301 individual tourism businesses in the Moray Speyside area, was made available for completion online in addition to being presented and discussed at a series of engagement events across the region.

Tourism businesses received emails, telephone calls and one-to-one visits throughout the Visit Moray Speyside Renewal process to keep them informed of progress as well as regular newsletters and email contact.

Three drop-in meetings and awareness events held in partnership with the Moray Chamber of Commerce, VisitScotland and Elgin BID during July. Representatives of the Visit Moray Speyside Board of Directors attended each of these events.

# 90

**90 ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTATIONS COMPLETED IN PERSON AND BY PHONE AS OF 20 SEP 2024**



**45.5%**  
INTEND TO VOTE 'YES'

**5.5%**  
INTEND TO VOTE 'NO'

**48.8%**  
SAY THEY ARE UNDECIDED\*

\*or people we haven't engaged with

## OUTCOME

Following feedback received during the consultation and engagement process, the CEO and Board of Directors created a business plan document which was posted to all eligible businesses along with a copy of the business questionnaire.

As the ballot date approaches it is planned to visit as many eligible businesses as possible to discuss the proposed projects and services that the businesses overall have indicated they would like Visit Moray Speyside to deliver, in addition to holding more open events.

# YOUR FEEDBACK

The initial survey of tourism businesses took place between Apr 2024 and Aug 2024 and was carried out via newsletters, emails, group consultations and one-on-one meetings.

## WHAT YOU SAID WE DID WELL

Feedback from businesses in the region has highlighted several areas where VMS has excelled:

### ✓ MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Effective promotion of the region through various digital platforms.

### ✓ WEEKLY MEMBER NEWSLETTER

- Regular updates and communications keeping members informed.

### ✓ VISIT MORAY SPEYSIDE WEBSITE

- A comprehensive resource for visitors, showcasing the region's attractions.

### ✓ CREATION OF VISITOR MATERIALS

- High-quality maps, golf guides, and other materials to enhance visitor experience.

### ✓ BUSINESS SUPPORT

- Assistance with legislative changes and other business needs.

## WHAT YOU ASKED FOR

Our members have also identified areas where they would like to see further development:

### ✓ EXTENDING THE TOURISM SEASON

- Initiatives to attract visitors year-round.

### ✓ INCREASED TRAVEL TRADE ACTIVITIES

- Regular updates and communications keeping members informed.

### ✓ RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

- Promoting sustainable and eco-friendly tourism practices.

### ✓ COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DMOS

- Strengthening partnerships with other Destination Marketing Organisations.

## OUR MAIN OBJECTIVES

### MARKETING THE DESTINATION

Marketing the destination was to continue to be the key priority for Visit Moray Speyside.

### BEING A COLLECTIVE VOICE

Continuation of a collective tourism voice and advocate, to protect their interests and fight their corner.

MARKETING THE DESTINATION



BEING A COLLECTIVE VOICE



“ Visit Moray Speyside truly punches above its weight, delivering exceptional results in raising the region's profile and boosting tourism. It's been a privilege to work with such a dedicated team. Personally, no part of Scotland compares to Moray Speyside for a holiday – it's simply unbeatable! ”



Stephen Whitelaw,  
Digital Expert

# THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

## VISION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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Looking ahead, Moray Speyside has a promising opportunity to become a standout destination in both the UK and international travel markets. Our goal is to showcase the region's unique charm and diverse attractions, making it a top choice for travellers seeking memorable experiences.

To achieve this, our organisation is committed to helping put Moray Speyside on the map and supporting the growth of the local tourism industry. By focusing on strategic marketing, engaging campaigns, and collaboration with local businesses, we aim to highlight the region's best features and attract visitors. The overall objective is to drive growth in the value of the Moray Speyside visitor economy, with an ambition to help the region reach £220m by 2030.

The Moray Growth Deal is a significant initiative that will bring over £100 million of investment into the region, funding eight strategic projects aimed at driving economic development. VMS is a key partner in this endeavour, playing a pivotal role in supporting Moray Council's efforts to realise their ambitions. By harnessing these transformational investments, VMS will help unlock Moray's untapped tourism potential, positioning the area as a premier destination and stimulating long-term growth for the local economy.

Our approach will be centred on promoting the unique aspects of Moray Speyside, driving sustainable growth, and building strong connections with travellers. We are excited about the possibilities and look forward to working together to see Moray Speyside thrive as a premier destination.



# MARKETING STRATEGY

This expanded strategy outlines specific actions and initiatives that will help us achieve our goals. By focusing on enhanced media engagement, targeted marketing, community participation, brand development, digital expansion, collaboration, sustainability, market research, product development, event promotion, and international outreach, we are well-positioned to elevate Moray Speyside's standing in the competitive travel market.

## ENHANCED MEDIA AND INFLUENCER ENGAGEMENT

As we look to the future, our strategy will centre on promoting Moray Speyside as a premier destination, both within the UK and internationally. We will continue to keep the region on the map, attracting visitors by showcasing its unique charm and diverse attractions. A key part of this will be maintaining and enhancing the organisation of media visits, which are instrumental in highlighting what Moray Speyside has to offer, from its stunning landscapes to its rich cultural heritage.

## TARGETED MARKETING EFFORTS

Our marketing efforts will be strategically targeted at specific sectors, such as accommodation, food and drink, and outdoor activities, to fully showcase the region's variety. To further engage both locals and visitors, we will launch media campaigns that members can actively participate in, beginning with the new #MoraySpeysideMoments initiative. This campaign will encourage people to share their personal experiences of the region, helping to build a stronger community connection and broader recognition of Moray Speyside's appeal.

## INTERNATIONAL MARKETING EFFORTS

Recognising the potential of international markets, we will develop targeted campaigns to attract visitors from key overseas regions. This may involve participating in international travel trade shows, forming partnerships with overseas tour operators, and creating multilingual marketing materials to cater to a global audience.

## BRAND DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

Building on our existing strengths, we will continue to develop the Taste of Moray Speyside and Moray Speyside Golf brands, further enhancing the region's reputation as a top destination for food, drink, and golf enthusiasts. In addition, we will explore innovative ways to expand our digital marketing reach, leveraging social media, influencer partnerships, and targeted online advertising to attract a wider audience.

## EVENT PROMOTION AND SUPPORT

Events play a crucial role in attracting visitors and showcasing the vibrancy of the region. We will actively promote existing events and support the development of new ones, such as festivals, exhibitions, and sporting events. By highlighting a year-round calendar of activities, we can encourage off-peak travel and extend the tourist season.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

To ensure a cohesive and impactful approach, we will work closely with local businesses and community groups. This collaboration will help create a unified regional identity and ensure that our promotional efforts benefit the entire area.

## MARKET RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS

To inform our marketing strategies and ensure their effectiveness, we will conduct ongoing market research and data analysis. This will include monitoring tourism trends, visitor demographics, and feedback from both guests and local businesses. By staying informed about the latest developments and adjusting our approaches accordingly, we can remain competitive and responsive to the needs of our target markets.

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INITIATIVES

Another key focus will be on sustainable tourism, ensuring that as we attract more visitors, we also protect and preserve the natural beauty and cultural heritage that make Moray Speyside so special. We will explore opportunities for eco-friendly initiatives, such as promoting green accommodations, partnering with Moray Council to further develop walking and cycling trails, and encourage responsible travel practices among visitors.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

We will establish clear metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor the success of our marketing initiatives. Regular evaluation will allow us to measure progress, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate the value of our efforts to stakeholders.



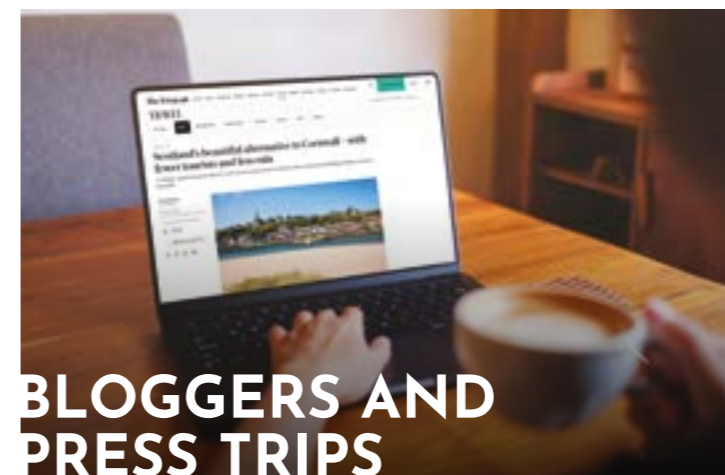
TRAVEL TRADE ACTIVITY



UK AND OVERSEAS SHOWS AND EXPOS



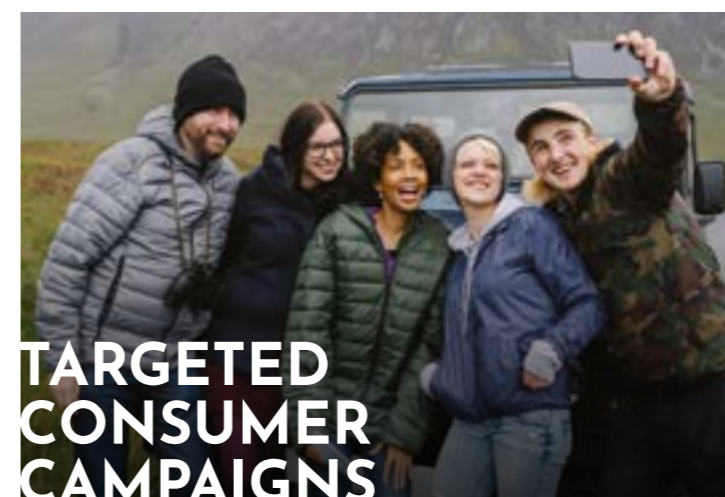
FAMILIARISATION TRIPS



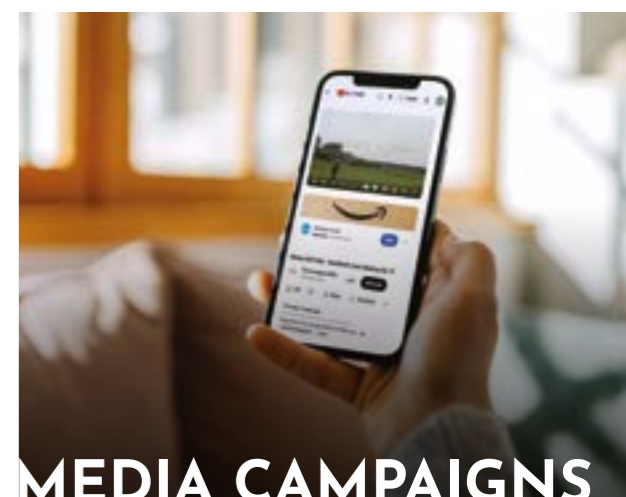
BLOGGERS AND PRESS TRIPS



CONSUMER MARKETING



TARGETED CONSUMER CAMPAIGNS



MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

# ADVOCACY FOR THE INDUSTRY

Given the ever-evolving tourism landscape, along with the challenges posed by Brexit, rising business costs such as staff costs, utility costs etc, the potential introduction of a Visitor Levy, and the ongoing reductions in public sector budgets, the need for a strong, unified voice to represent Moray Speyside's tourism industry has never been more crucial.

Visit Moray Speyside is fully committed to supporting tourism businesses across the region, ensuring that the sector has a cohesive and influential voice. We will advocate on behalf of the industry with local, regional, and national authorities, championing the interests of businesses and pushing for enhancements for vital infrastructure and visitor services. These improvements include better transport links, clearer and more effective signage, and upgrades to public facilities such as toilets and waste disposal, which are essential to providing an exceptional visitor experience.

VMS will lead the development of a new Tourism Strategy for Moray & Speyside, covering the period from 2025 to 2035, which will incorporate all future investments and play a key role in the potential introduction of a Visitor Levy Scheme. This comprehensive strategy will be essential in guiding the region's tourism sector towards sustainable growth, ensuring that investments are effectively leveraged to enhance visitor experiences, improve infrastructure, and promote the unique attractions of Moray & Speyside. A clear tourism strategy is vital to ensuring long-term success, as it will provide a roadmap for boosting visitor numbers, supporting local businesses, and maximising economic benefits for the area.

**“Extending the visitor season - themed weeks to be targeted for shoulder season. There has certainly been improvement in the tourist offering.”**

As part of our advocacy strategy, we will work to reinforce our position as a key intermediary between the tourism and hospitality sectors and government authorities. Our focus will be on lobbying for policies and initiatives that encourage sustainable growth, such as securing funding for local projects, infrastructure enhancements, and ensuring that any legislation, like the proposed Visitor Levy, is implemented in a way that supports the long-term viability of the sector.

In times of economic uncertainty or public health crises, we will continue to serve as a reliable resource for businesses, offering guidance, information, and support to help the industry navigate challenges effectively. Our role will be to provide a steady hand during difficult periods, ensuring that the sector remains resilient and well-informed.

Our advocacy will also extend beyond the region to national and international tourism events, trade shows, and conferences. By representing Moray Speyside on these platforms, we can ensure that the region's unique qualities and attractions are showcased to a wider, global audience, helping to drive further interest and investment.

To foster a collaborative approach, we are committed to maintaining open and transparent communication with local businesses, industry leaders, and stakeholders. Regular newsletters, updates, and meetings will be essential to keeping everyone informed and engaged, ensuring that we work together to address the needs of the region effectively.

Additionally, we will look to strengthen our Board of Directors, ensuring diverse representation from across all sectors of the tourism industry. By doing so, we can address a wide range of perspectives, ensuring that our advocacy efforts are comprehensive and inclusive.

Through these strategies, we are excited to build on Moray Speyside's strengths, driving growth and ensuring that the tourism and hospitality sector continues to thrive, while positioning the region as a leading destination for visitors from across the UK and beyond.

# VISITOR LEVY

“ The Scotland Outlook 2030 Strategy, developed by partners, including Highlands and Islands Enterprise, acknowledges tourism as having a significant role in delivering Scotland’s wider economic strategy, cutting across every sector and touching every part of Scotland’s economy. ”

David Reid, Area Manager  
Moray, Highlands & Islands Enterprise



Elgin  
Kim Grant

## ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITIES

If the Visitor Levy is introduced, and Visit Moray Speyside receives £200,000 in funds which is an indicative annual amount, it would be a transformative opportunity for the region’s tourism sector. These funds would enable Visit Moray Speyside to invest in a wide range of initiatives designed to support both the visitor experience and the growth of local businesses. The investment would allow us to not only improve infrastructure but also directly support businesses in developing new offerings and enhancing their overall competitiveness.

When helping to shape any Visitor Levy Scheme in Moray, we will advocate for help to local businesses to create new, engaging experiences for visitors. This could involve funding for the development of unique tourism activities, enhancing existing attractions, or offering support for seasonal events and festivals that draw more visitors to the area. Additionally, we could offer grants and training programmes that help businesses upskill their staff, ensuring that they can offer high-quality customer service and adapt to the evolving needs of the tourism market.

We also recognise the importance of supporting local businesses in improving their online presence, which is vital in today’s digital world. The funds could be used to provide workshops and consultancy services focused on enhancing digital marketing skills, improving websites, and optimising businesses’ visibility across key booking platforms. Strengthening the online presence of local businesses would help ensure they are competitive on a global stage, attracting a wider audience and increasing direct bookings.

Crucially, we believe that the allocation of these funds should be driven by the needs and input of the businesses themselves. As part of our commitment to working in partnership with the local authority, we will support consultations with tourism businesses across Moray Speyside to gather their views on how the funds should be spent. This collaborative approach ensures that the investment aligns with the needs of the industry and delivers maximum impact for the region.

VMS will play a pivotal role in coordinating tourism interests, but businesses will still have the opportunity to contribute and voice their opinions, whether or not they are directly involved with VMS. As the central advocate for the tourism sector, our role is to ensure that the money is invested in ways that support sustainable growth and respond to the real challenges faced by businesses. By ensuring our continued presence, we can play a key role on how the funds are spent in a way that benefits the entire region and secures a bright future for Moray Speyside’s tourism industry.

## AIMS



ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



REPRESENTING YOUR INTERESTS TO KEY AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS



PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES ENGAGING WITH ONLINE TRAVEL AGENTS AND THE TRAVEL TRADE



PROMOTING THE REGION AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM EVENTS



SERVING AS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

# VISIT MORAY SPEYSIDE BID AREA

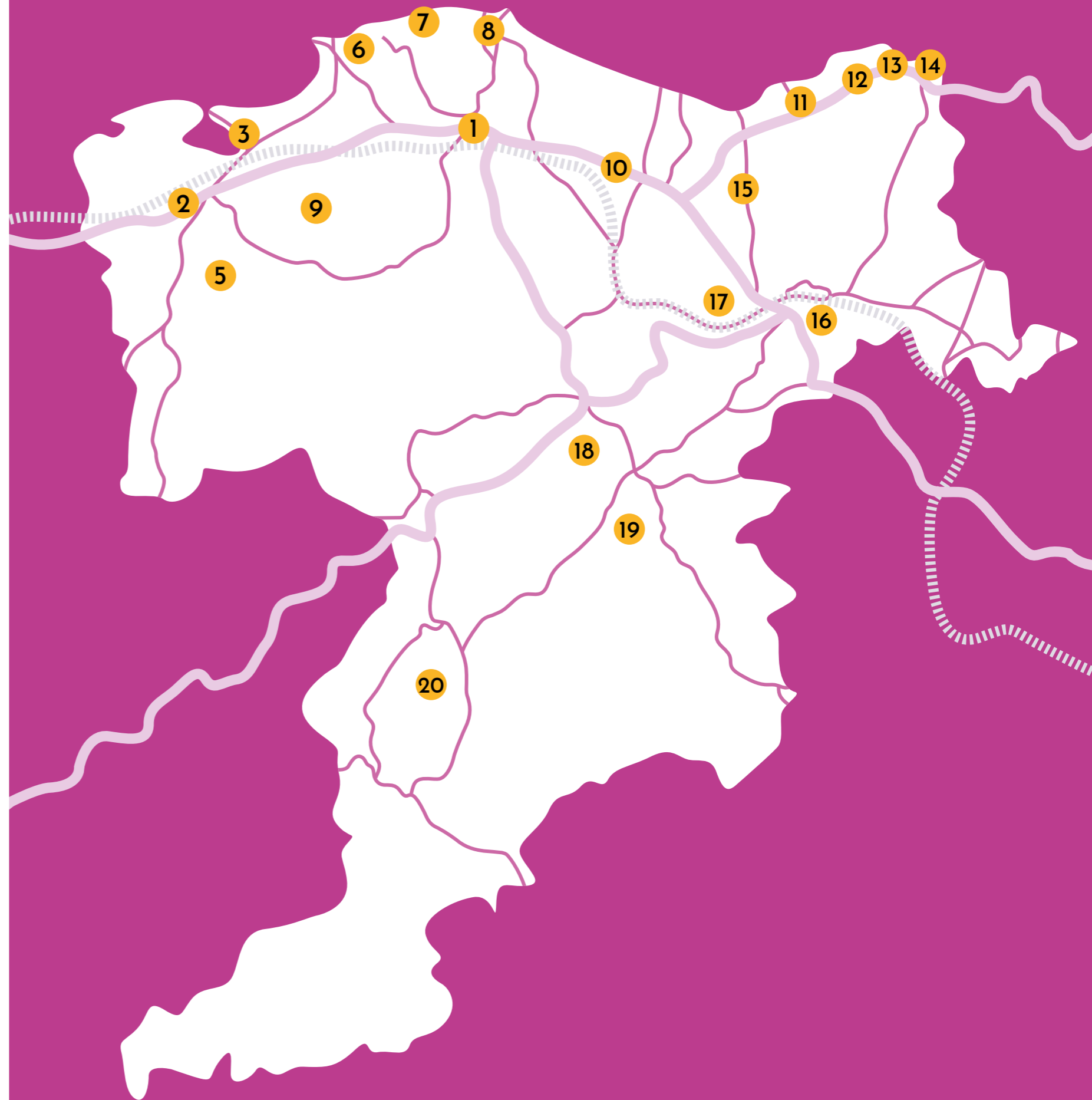
The operational area of Visit Moray Speyside was chosen to reflect the region of Moray and refers to Moray Council wards shown below.

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Elgin                   | 11 Buckie and District    |
| 2 Forres                  | 12 Findochty and District |
| 3 Findhorn and Kinloss    | 13 Portknockie            |
| 4 Dyke Landward           | 14 Cullen and Deskford    |
| 5 Finnerne                | 15 Lennox,                |
| 6 Burghead and Cummington | 16 Keith                  |
| 7 Hopeman and Covesea     | 17 Strathisla             |
| 8 Lossiemouth             | 18 Speyside               |
| 9 Heldon and Laich        | 19 Dufftown and District  |
| 10 Innes                  | 20 Glenlivet              |

## 403

ELIGIBLE TOURISM BUSINESSES  
LOCATED IN THE VISIT MORAY  
SPEYSIDE BID AREA AS AT  
1 SEP 2024.\*

\*Approximate value



# BUSINESSES INCLUDED

There are approximately 403 eligible tourism businesses in the Visit Moray Speyside BID area whose levy payments will generate c£192,000 per annum (net) and an estimated total levy income of £982,471 (net) over five years. In the next five-year term food and drink businesses will be included in the levy adding in approximately 51 new businesses.

## THE FOUR CRITERIA TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SCOPE OF VISIT MORAY SPEYSIDE:

### BUSINESSES IN THESE SECTORS

- Activity and Outdoor Centre
- Guest House
- Bed and Breakfast Accommodation
- Heritage Centre
- Bowling Alley
- Holiday Complex
- Brewery/Distillery with visitor centre or shop
- Hostel
- Bunkhouse
- Hotel
- Caravan Park
- Information Centre
- Caravan Site
- Inn or Restaurant with rooms
- Caravan and Camping Site
- Museum/Gallery
- Castle and Visitor Centre
- Self-catering Accommodation
- Castle
- Serviced Apartments
- Chalets
- Tourist Shop
- Exclusive Use Venue
- Visitor Centre/Visitor Attraction
- Golf Course, Golf Club and Clubhouse
- Youth Hostel

### THE BUSINESS PREMISES ARE IN MORAY SPEYSIDE

The designated geographical area covered by Visit Moray Speyside.

### THE BUSINESS HAS A NON-DOMESTIC RATEABLE VALUE OF £2,000 OR ABOVE

### THE BUSINESS IS ELIGIBLE TO PAY NON-DOMESTIC RATES

As detailed on Moray Council Valuation Roll by the local Assessor (even if exempt).



## ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITIES

It has been agreed by the Visit Moray Speyside Board of Directors that the levy rate will be based on the rateable value (RV) of the property on the day of the ballot, and which rateable value will remain unchanged throughout the five-year term of the BID:

- The levy structure will be based on 1.8 % of NDR on the rateable value (RV) of the property on the day of the ballot 20/03/2025 and remain the same throughout the five-year term of the BID
- There is the potential for an increase in the levy amount over the term of the BID through inflationary RPI rises of up to 3%, which will be agreed by the Board of Directors annually
- The BID levy will be paid by the occupier (the eligible person liable to pay the non-domestic rates)
- All eligible occupiers (of eligible properties) i.e. the eligible person liable to pay the non-domestic rate, as listed on the Local Assessors Valuation Roll on the ballot date will be liable to pay the levy
- The levy payments are not linked to what businesses actually pay in rates but are based on the rateable value of the property
- The levy must be paid either in one payment within 28 days from the date of the levy invoice or in ten instalments by arrangement with Moray Council billing body
- If there is a change, in occupier to a property, until a new occupier is found, the property owner will be responsible for paying the levy
- Self-catering holiday accommodation which is not the sole or main residence of any person and which is available (or intended to be available) for letting on a commercial basis, with profit in mind, for short periods totalling more than 140 days in the financial year remain liable for non-domestic rates for the whole year and will be included and liable to pay the levy
- Any new, eligible tourism business starting within, or coming into the Visit Moray Speyside area during the five-year term of the Tourism Business Improvement District will be liable for the Tourism BID Levy
- The Visit Moray Speyside Board of Directors has agreed that the levy would be applied to properties with a rateable value of £2,000 and above

## OTHER BUSINESSES

Food and Drink businesses (cafés, pubs, restaurants) are included if they are licensed premises.

Other tourism businesses, such as activity and tour businesses without premises, or below the RV threshold but who would still like to participate in Visit Moray Speyside, will be able to 'opt-in' paying the appropriate minimum annual levy.

Non-tourism businesses can also opt-in as supporters as part of their wider corporate social responsibility commitments.

## EXCLUSIONS

The Visit Moray Speyside Board of Directors decided to exclude premises that have a rateable value of under £2,000. These premises can pay a voluntary levy and become an 'opt-in member' should they wish.

The Visit Moray Speyside Board of Directors decided that the following categories of property are exempt from paying the levy:

Tourism businesses run or operated solely by volunteers, i.e. that have no paid staff, whether or not they charge an entrance or service fee.

# PROJECTED INCOME & EXPENDITURE

As at 1 Sep 2024, there are approximately 403 eligible properties located within the Visit Moray Speyside area (this figure will vary as businesses move, expand or close). The BID levy income is calculated to be c£192,000 (gross) per annum.

## EXPENDITURE

Visit Moray Speyside will seek to secure additional funding for specific projects. It will also attract other investment, sponsorship and generate trading income to increase the amount available to spend on projects as they develop.

Funds will be sought from other sources, including but not restricted to; Visitor Levy, Windfarm Community Benefit Funds, private companies, trusts, foundations and others.

Visit Moray Speyside's Board of Directors will agree on an annual basis how the funds will be spent for the coming year, based on the published Business Plan.

Visit Moray Speyside's Board of Directors will have the authority to adapt or alter the projects and services to reflect any change in economic or other circumstances or any new opportunities that may arise. Any such changes will be in the best interests of the businesses and without recourse to an alteration ballot.

**CURRENT SCOTTISH COLLECTION RATES FOR THE BID LEVY ARE REPORTED TO BE STANDING AT:**

**95%**

With this in mind, an amount has been set aside in the budget under 'contingency' to allow for any bad debt.

Visit Moray Speyside's Board of Directors appointed Johnston Carmichael accountants in 2020, and we will continue to use them as our trusted accountants. Since April 2020, an authorisation and expenditure process has been in place to ensure that the financial management of the Moray Speyside Tourism BID Company is entirely open and transparent.

Budgets will be reconciled on a quarterly basis to ensure good governance and financial management. At the end of the operational year a full set of accounts will be prepared and presented to the Board of Directors.

The annual accounts will be presented to the Visit Moray Speyside members at the Annual General Meeting and a summary of the accounts will be published in the Annual Report which will be published on the Visit Moray Speyside web page.

Moray Council will collect the levy payments on behalf of Visit Moray Speyside and will transfer the levies collected to Visit Moray Speyside. The Visit Moray Speyside Board and CEO will manage the levy funds once remitted by the Council.

In the event of any non-payment of the Visit Moray Speyside BID levy, it will be strongly pursued by Moray Council (as the billing body) using the recovery powers available to them to ensure complete fairness to all the businesses that have paid.

INCOME IN	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	TOTAL
Income from Tourism BID Levy*	£192,604	£194,530	£196,475	£198,439	£200,423	£982,471
Opt-in Memberships**	£2,500	£3,500	£4,000	£5,000	£6,500	£21,500
Income from Commercial Activity**	£7,500	£8,500	£9,500	£10,000	£10,500	£46,000
Visitor Levy***	£0	£0	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000	£600,000
Other Grants / Funding****	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£202,604</b>	<b>£206,530</b>	<b>£409,975</b>	<b>£413,439</b>	<b>£417,423</b>	<b>£1,649,971</b>

EXPENDITURE	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	TOTAL
Destination Marketing	£80,000	£82,000	£190,000	£192,000	£195,000	£739,000
Supporting Your Business	£10,000	£10,000	£21,000	£22,000	£20,000	£83,000
Advocacy for the Industry	£1,500	£2,000	£3,500	£2,000	£1,800	£10,800
Overheads	£110,000	£112,000	£193,000	£195,000	£198,000	£808,000
Contingency	£1104	£1415	£2180	£2144	£2328	£9171
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£202,604</b>	<b>£207,415</b>	<b>£409,680</b>	<b>£413,144</b>	<b>£417,128</b>	<b>£1,649,971</b>

(\*The Tourism BID levy increases annually with an inflation adjustment of 1%, subject to approval by the Board of Directors. The Board also reserves the option to increase the inflation adjustment up to a maximum of 3% if deemed necessary).

(\*\*Opt-in Membership and Income from Commercial Activity is currently not secured or committed by others. Therefore, in the event any or all of this funding is not realised then the scope of some of the projects outlined will be adjusted correspondingly, to ensure that they remain within budget).

(\*\*\*Subject to introduction of the Visitor Levy and dependant on model set, figures above are subject to change dependant on introduction and allocation).

(\*\*\*\*Subject to available grants and funding and successful applications).

# THE LEVY

In deciding the proposed levy scale, the Visit Moray Speyside Board of Directors looked at levy arrangements for every other Scottish Business Improvement District.

Visit Moray Speyside Board have researched nearby Inverness Tourism BID, and considered feedback from businesses during stages of consultation that a fairer charge of levy was required in line with rateable values. The levy has been changed from a banded system to a percentage rate. The levy will be charged at 1.8% of the rateable value of a property with the lower cap reduced by £23.00 to £250 and a higher increase cap at £3,500.

- The levy provides, with some additional income, the amount required to deliver the business plan
- A percentage model was chosen as it represents a fairer way for businesses dependant on their size
- There will be a lower cap of £250 per annum which is affordable for the smallest businesses
- A maximum cap of £3,500 is affordable for the businesses at the higher end of rateable values
- Whilst Visit Moray Speyside is focused predominately on tourism and visitor businesses, any business can 'opt-in' to Visit Moray Speyside, subject to approval by the Board of Directors, paying no less than the minimum annual levy payment

RATEABLE VALUE	ANNUAL LEVY	COST PER DAY
£1 - £1,999 (Optional Voluntary Payment)	£250	68p
£2,000 - £13,999	£250	68p
£30,000	£540	£1.48
£50,000	£900	£2.46
£100,000	£1,800	£4.90
£150,000	£2,700	£7.39
£194,500	£3,500	£9.58

\*This table is only a guide to show a percentage model levy system (1.8%) and not a banded system

## COLLECTION OF THE BID LEVY

**Moray Council will collect the levy on behalf of Visit Moray Speyside**

Moray Council will lodge the levy within a Revenue Account on behalf of Visit Moray Speyside.

The BID Revenue Account and levy cannot be accessed by Moray Council, nor can it be used by the Council as an additional source of income.

## ENFORCEMENT

**In the event of any non-payment of the Visit Moray Speyside levy, Moray Council (as the billing body) will strongly pursue non-payment using recovery powers available to them to ensure complete fairness to all the businesses that have paid.**

Moray Council will be entitled to charge an additional fee to the levy amount to meet any additional costs incurred in the recovery of the levy.

# THE BALLOT

## PRE-BALLOT

The CEO must submit the Visit Moray Speyside Proposals to the Local Authority, the Scottish Ministers and the billing body along with a letter detailing their intention to put the BID Proposals to ballot. Under legislation the prescribed local authority BID Proposal veto period, is 70 days prior to the day of the ballot.

A 'Notice of Ballot' will be issued at least 42 days before the day of ballot.

## THE BALLOT



**THE LAST DATE FOR ALL BALLOT PAPERS TO BE RETURNED IS 5PM ON 20 MAR 2025**



**VOTING PAPERS ARE EASY TO COMPLETE, SIMPLY PLACE A CROSS ON EITHER 'YES' OR 'NO' TO THE QUESTION**



**THE BALLOT PAPERS WILL BE COUNTED ON 21 MAR 2025**

- Ballot papers will be posted to the eligible person responsible for casting a vote within their business 42 days before the ballot day. In the case of national companies, the responsibility for voting may lie with head office
- Prior to or on the date the ballot papers are issued the CEO of Visit Moray Speyside will provide to all those eligible to vote in the ballot, a copy of the BID Business Plan
- The Visit Moray Speyside ballot is a confidential postal ballot conducted by Moray Council on behalf of Visit Moray Speyside, in accordance with Scottish BID legislation
- In Visit Moray Speyside case, voting papers will be issued no later than the 6 Feb 2025
- The last date for all ballot papers to be returned is 5pm on 20 Mar 2025. Papers received after this date and time will be deemed null and void
- Voting papers are easy to complete, simply place a cross on either 'yes' or 'no' to the question "are you in favour of Visit Moray Speyside?" The ballot paper must then be signed by the person eligible to vote and returned in the pre-paid envelope
- Some eligible persons may receive more than one ballot paper. Each ballot paper should be completed, signed and returned in its pre-paid envelope
- For the ballot to be successful there must be a minimum turnout of 25% (the headcount) by number of eligible persons and by combined rateable value; and of those who vote, the majority must vote in favour by number and combined rateable value
- All eligible persons (i.e. those persons liable to pay non-domestic rates) will have one vote or where a person is liable for non-domestic rates for more than one property, that individual shall be eligible to cast more than one vote however they will be required to pay the levy for each of the properties that they occupy
- The ballot papers will be counted on 21 Mar 2025 and the results announced by Moray Council within one week
- Following a successful ballot, the BID will continue on 1 Apr 2025 and will run for a period of five years until the 31 Mar 2030

# VOTE

# YES!

**WITHOUT VISIT MORAY SPEYSIDE THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE PLAN TO PROMOTE TOURISM AND LOCAL BUSINESSES, LIMITING GROWTH AND UNDERUTILISING MORAY SPEYSIDE'S POTENTIAL.**



Moray will be the only area in Scotland without a Destination Marketing Organisation, essentially leaving it to decline in tourism.



There will be no coordinated effort to boost the local economy through tourism.



There will be no tourism development organisation for our region.



Collaboration between tourism businesses, local authorities, and external partners will decline, leading to a fragmented approach.



There will be no organisation to support events and festivals in our region.



Local tourism businesses will struggle to connect with wider markets, limiting their growth potential.



The region's profile in the competitive Scottish tourism market will diminish, reducing visitor numbers and economic benefit.



There will be fewer opportunities to attract sustainable and responsible tourism to the region.



There will be no organisation working to secure additional funding to improve conditions for tourism businesses in Moray Speyside.

I don't normally email mid trip, but I had to message just to let you know what an incredible time we're having. We've just finished the Johnston of Elgin tour which I think has been the best tour I've ever had.  
My Pretty Chapters



The potential of local attractions, from whisky distilleries to heritage sites, will be underutilised.

The video was perfect. The article was perfect. The week was perfect. I just want to do it again and again.  
It seems as if the town came together and supported each other as well as all our customers. We asked some when they came out if it was for cocktail week and a majority said yes.  
Moray Cocktail Week



**VOTE FOR TOURISM  
VOTE YES**



**VOTE FOR LOCAL BUSINESS  
VOTE YES**



**UNLOCK OUR  
REGION'S POTENTIAL:**

**VOTE YES**

**FROM 6 FEB 2025**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT:**

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