

# KEEP THE RAF IN MORAY

Bulletin 15

12th January 2011

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**  
from all in the Moray Task Force

## Moray takes the Battle to London

It has been a busy start to 2011 and the campaign focus has moved South as the Moray community have taken their protest to the doors of Downing Street. Moray Council Convener and member of the Task Force, George McIntyre, joined Cllr David Stewart and local campaigners on the battle bus to personally deliver the 30,000 names collected on the Northern Scot People's Petition.

The handover which happened yesterday coincided with a meeting of First Minister Alex Salmond with Defence Secretary Liam Fox. The First Minister set out the convincing case for Scotland to retain both RAF Leuchars and RAF Lossiemouth.

The impact of the UK Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) on Scotland's defence footprint was discussed in detail at the talks in London.

Speaking after meeting with Mr Fox, the First Minister said:

"The people of Moray and Fife have been pleading with the MoD and UK Government for clarity on this issue for months but to no avail. I share their concerns about how the process is being handled - especially as Scotland has already suffered due to the cancellation of the Nimrod contract which was a hammer blow for the people of Moray.

"While the Scottish Government has taken decisive action - announcing financial support to help cope with the fall-out of the UK Government's decision and co-ordinating the campaign to protect RAF Leuchars and RAF Lossiemouth from closure - the response from London to date has been very disappointing."

## Moray Task Force

The next meeting of Moray Task Force will be on Friday 14 January.

## Strategy for the Future

On Monday of this week Task Force members welcomed Enterprise Minister Jim Mather to Moray. Moray Chamber of Commerce hosted an event where the Minister discussed first hand with those affected the challenges facing local business. Later in the day there was also a top level meeting where the heads of Scotland's public agencies outlined measures that could be taken to support Moray communities.

Mr Mather said that work already carried out through the Moray Task Force to support the community in its campaign, meant the area was perfectly placed to work together to create a visionary strategy for its own future.

Task Force partners at RAF Kinloss are setting up skills assessment and retraining opportunities at Kinloss, with networking events and a work club planned for mid January at the base. Other activities to support the wider economy already underway include: a dedicated marketing programme for Moray by VisitScotland; accelerated local capital investment by the NHS; promotion by HIE and SDI of the Smart Exporter programme to support businesses expand their markets; and Moray Council is adapting its long term infrastructure plan for Elgin and the wider Moray area.

Alex Paterson, Chief Executive of HIE, said that developing a clear proposition for Moray's revitalisation was vital.

He commented: "The business community has given a clear message that it wants to create real solutions. We need to develop a strong case detailing what investments today will create a socially and economically sustainable Moray tomorrow.

"The public bodies here today have outlined many opportunities which could be developed, the growth of key sectors like energy and medical research, an internationally renowned food and drinks market and strong tourism. We want to encourage businesses to look to international markets and promote new inward investment. Moray is an amazing place to live and work and its future potential lies in supporting the skills of its people, its businesses and its communities."

## Forres Gazette

The Forres Gazette today has been gathering support for its campaign – 'A fair deal for Kinloss and Forres'. It is calling on local people to work together for a brighter future.

The Task Force has commented that it wants to see a clear timetable which will allow Kinloss and the local community and its businesses to plan. HIE's Calum MacPherson also outlined the importance of ensuring the site is not allowed to become redundant.

## Armed Forces Minister coming to Moray

Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey, who had to cancel a planned visit to Moray in December due to poor weather, is set to return to the area.

He has been in contact with Moray Task Force to assure members that he and the Ministry of Defence are taking local concerns over the future of the bases very seriously.

He will meet the Task Force on Thursday 27th January.

## Moray Task Force...

has come together to address the impact on Moray of the UK Government's Strategic Defence and Security Review, published in October 2010.

Made up of private business, the public sector and community groups, the task force is campaigning to keep the Tornados at RAF Lossiemouth and to support the businesses and communities affected by the cancellation of the Nimrod contract at RAF Kinloss.

