

Moray Economic Partnership

Teams Meeting

Thursday 10th December 2020 @ 15:00

Graham Leadbitter (Chair)	Moray Council
Andrew Anderson	tsiMoray
David Patterson	Moray College UHI
Ewen Mackintosh	Gordon & MacPhail
Jim Grant	Moray Council
Laurie Piper	Visit Moray Speyside
Pearl Hamilton	FSB
Rona Campbell	HIE
Sarah Medcraf	Moray Chamber of Commerce
Stephen Sheridan	SDS
Stuart Black	HIE
Tim Eagle	Councillor, Moray Council
Kerry Williams (Minutes)	HIE

Apologies

Katherine Mackintosh	Robertson
Michael O'Donnell	Moray Council
Rhona Gunn	Moray Council
Dr Jamie Hogg	NHS Grampian
John Cowe	Councillor, Moray Council

1.	Welcome by Chair Welcome from Chair and minutes from last meeting agreed.	
2.	Round Table Updates Rona Assisting the Business Team at HIE Moray with administering the Digital Enablement Grant (DEG). There was a high level of interest in this grant. The original budget for HIE has increased from £500k to £2.8M. Funding is also available through Business Gateway. NHS recruitment project is positive with surgeon posts now being advertised and filled. Stuart The pre-application notice for the MAATIC project has been submitted and the Council has approved the road extension at Enterprise Park Forres which is now on site. HIE are continuing to support businesses and communities.	

Stephen

Apprenticeship Employer Grant for modern graduate apprentices opened from the 1st of December. This provides employers with a grant of up to £5k for apprentices up to 24 years of age and those with additional needs up to 29 years of age. There is also a scheme to adopt apprentices who have lost placements during the pandemic. Expansion of the Flexible Work Support Fund is available through the college for SMEs.

Pearl

FSB have carried out a survey that showed 1/5 of self-employed had no financial support through Covid. Hoping that the £30M Discretionary Fund may assist. Kickstart scheme is now in place with FSB and Adecco working together. FSB will be hosting a Brexit transition hub webinar next week.

GL commented that the Rural Recovery Group have also identified those who have fallen through the gaps, such as those who do not operate from premises or those in receipt of dividends instead of a salary, should also receive some sort of support from the Discretionary Grant.

David

Feedback received from students and staff show they are coping with change. The college is running at a reduced capacity and blended learning is working well. Good news that SMEs will have money available for training. A Strategic Grant will offer two years of funding. MGD business cases progressing well at this stage.

Ewen

Brexit has been the hot topic of late. G&M trying to get as many shipments to Europe before the 31st of December with logistics being the main issue. The cost impact has already been felt on importing and exporting before the transition. Access to workforce will be difficult, especially within the construction industry.

The abolition of duty-free sales post Brexit will have a negative impact but the potential removal of US tariffs from the 1st January is welcome news. Potential impacts from the UK budget in March.

Prior to Covid the region was in a good place with connectivity, however, the Inverness-Amsterdam flights have been cancelled until the spring and recent rumours circulating that the A96 dualling may be delayed 5 years. The physical infrastructure is important for the Covid Recovery Plan.

GL confirmed that as far as he was aware the A96 dualling project has not been pushed back.

Andrew

The tsiMoray AGM was well attended. The Leader programme has successfully delivered throughout Moray. There has been lots of activity with community enterprise.

<p>Home working has been popular during the past few months and now looking into whether tsiMoray staff will return back to their large office premises in Elgin High Street in the future.</p> <p>Sarah Moray Chamber of Commerce have now recruited an administrator and a new Operations Manager to start in the new year.</p> <p>The application for MCC to administer the Kickstart scheme has now been accepted with 115 placements on offer from a variety of sectors. A second batch will be opened up due to popular demand. Applications from sole traders will be passed to FSB.</p> <p>With regards to Brexit, many of the Chamber members had not seen themselves as importers so haven't thought about the transition. Pleased that the Recovery Plan is looking to procure and provide 1:1 specialist support with Moray Council and HIE.</p> <p>Campaigning to bring forward the non-domestic rates review from 2023 to 2022. Almost 2/3 of businesses that are eligible for recent business grants from Moray Council have not yet applied so will be encouraging them to apply to be able to get money through before Christmas.</p> <p>Action: MCC, FSB and VMS to compile lists of those to recommend for Discretionary Grant.</p> <p>Laurie There are high levels of distress in the tourism industry, especially businesses such as travel agents. Confusion over tiers – who/when/how many/where and what constitutes a bubble when taking bookings.</p> <p>VMS has recently hosted a virtual tour of Moray for international travel trade buyers and will be launching a travel trade campaign toolkit shortly. Next year is looking brighter and aiming to get businesses ready for a busy 2022.</p> <p>Final demands for Tourism BID have been sent out but businesses disinclined to pay the levy when there has hardly been a tourism industry this year.</p> <p>Graham RAF Lossiemouth will see a number of other air forces arriving over the coming months and they are looking how best to communicate and reassure the public over Covid fears. Overseas military personnel are being Covid tested stringently before and after arrival. These visitors are good for the local economy. LP asked if there could be better communication between RAF Lossiemouth and hoteliers to be able to provide suitable accommodation as previously unaware and the region lost a potential 200 bed spaces. GL confirmed that RAF personnel numbers will steadily rise due to the Poseidon venture.</p>	<p>SM/DG/LP</p>
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	<p>Tim Have been receiving lots of enquiries from businesses, hotels and fisherman especially expressing their concerns over Brexit.</p> <p>Jim Concentrating on the Economic Recovery Fund looking at sub-dividing large retail spaces that are empty. Also identifying appropriate shops and businesses for the Pop-up shop scheme.</p> <p>Offering 1:1 support for local businesses to assist with the procurement and tendering processes.</p> <p>Discretionary Grant offer released and now need to identify potential gaps but will work with other local authorities to be consistent. SM asked whether the Pop-up shop scheme could be extended beyond the initial 4 week lease period. All queries to be directed to Rene Milburn at the council.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Growth Deal Progress JG confirmed UK Government agreed for MGD to be over a 10 period rather than the original 15. Moray Council have been finalising the Outline Business Cases (OBCs) to submit to UK Government and Scottish Government to sign off by March before the Scottish elections to prevent a potential delay of a further six months.</p> <p>The Council-led Cultural Quarter project will be discussed at a public session of the Moray Council shortly with the concept plans for Grant Lodge and the Elgin Town Hall expected to create local interest. The Housing mix project is a private closed session due to commercial confidentiality.</p> <p>A press release will be going out shortly to announce the aerospace hub. Further work is to be done to make sure projects are shovel ready once they have been approved. The Digital Health project can progress early.</p> <p>GL confirmed there had been a number of changes in project boards to allow for more community involvement. The focus of the senior project officers is to get the delivery right.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Future of Working Groups The original MEP working groups were looking at different aspects of operational strategy and how to measure progress. Due to the change in circumstances, all baselines will need to be re-evaluated. GL would like to see a clear picture of where we are and set reasonable targets. He asked the group whether we want the same working groups and what the focus of the working groups should be?</p> <p>JG confirmed the economic strategy outcomes are still to be delivered. The Employment and Skills Group have been meeting fortnightly and would like to continue. The group has already completed the Moray Skills Investment Plan and were reviewing the next set of actions but will need to now concentrate on the recovery plan.</p>	

	<p>SS confirmed Talent Attraction, that currently sits with HIE, is important and potentially of great benefit post Brexit. SS felt his work sat better with the Skills and Employability group and that HIE should take over the chair of the Talent Attraction group. The Talent attraction group should continue to draw from the expertise available given the importance to the growth deal and continuing to promote MyMoray.</p> <p>ACTION RC to take over as Chair for Talent Attraction group</p> <p>SB said the Small Business Group have also been meeting fortnightly as the Business Resilience Forum. Since HIE, Business Gateway, Moray College UHI and partners will be working towards developing the Business Enterprise Hub (BEH) so it would make sense for this to be the lead on SME development. DP added that the BEH gives vision to join up all partnerships to scale up.</p> <p>At the start of 2021, GL would like to set out standardised group reports which are clear and consistent. There needs to be some way to measure performance. KPIs for economic development are to have a baselines ready for the Community Planning Board meeting in February.</p> <p>SM added that there has not been time to review over the past year as members have been reactive to the Covid-19 situation. She suggested there may be a sub-group to get through MGD and it would be helpful to have a summary of what we need help with and what we have achieved.</p> <p>This could be an opportunity to reset and adjust groups and members.</p>	<p>RC</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Future Meetings</p> <p>GL said that monthly meetings were necessary recently for quality of feedback but were too rapid for a strategic MEP. Therefore, future meetings will revert back to quarterly from the end of February. The next MEP will be able to report on progress of business rates review and discussions and a chance to represent people of Moray on economic issues. EM agreed that there needs to be a two-way flow. Quarterly meetings will allow time into the structure and to prepare reports.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>a. Prior to Covid-19, previous MEP meetings had external presentations. GL asked if we would like to continue these presentations from organisations with anything relevant or coming up in the future? It was agreed that MEP gained value from private sector visits and a focus on local achievements. JG suggested with the Digital roll out of R100 and 5G, it would be useful to bring someone from the industry in to speak.</p> <p>Action: JG to invite industry speaker</p> <p>b. Moray Chamber will have a nominated representative from February onwards once SM goes on maternity leave.</p> <p>c. JG suggested the following items to discuss as the next MEP: Community wealth building what it means and approaches from different areas.</p>	<p>JG</p>

	Growth Deal updates from project leads. Additional invites will need to go out. The project lead for the Business Enterprise Hub could get the ball rolling. Action: KW to send out additional invitations to MGD project leads to present at future MEP meetings.	KW
7.	Actions MCC, FSB and VMS to compile list of types of business to recommend for Discretionary Grant to Moray Council. RC – to take over as Chair for the Talent Attraction group JG – to contact a speaker on community wellbeing SB/JG – to discuss options for digital industry speaker SB/DP – to discuss BEH MGD group taking over the small business group workstream of MEP	SM/PH/LP RC JG SB/JG SB

Date and Time of next meeting

Wednesday 24th February 2021

Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm

All further meetings scheduled for last Wednesday of each quarter between 2:00 – 4:00pm as follows:

24 February

26 May

25 August

24 November