

Moray Economic Partnership

Strathisla Distillery, Keith

Thursday 26 September 2019, 10.00am

Graham Leadbitter (Chair)	Moray Council
Ewan Mcintosh	Gordon and MacPhail
Sarah Medcraf	Chamber of Commerce
Pearl Hamilton	FSB
Nathalie Agnew	Muckle Media
Don Vass	tsiMoray
David Patterson	Moray UHI
Jim Grant	Moray Council
Donna Chisholm (Vice-Chair)	HIE
Kerry Williams (minutes)	HIE
Gary Templeton	Moray Council (Presentation only)

Apologies

Laurie Piper	Moray Speyside Tourism
Katherine MacKintosh	Robertson
Dr Jamie Hogg	NHS Grampian
Stephen Sheridan	Skills Development Scotland
Rhona Gunn	Moray Council
Andrew Anderson (Don Vass representing)	tsiMoray

1.	Introductions and Initial Presentation <p>Ross Keddie, Chivas Brothers (Operations Manager North) welcomed the group and gave a brief presentation on the whisky industry, Chivas Brothers as an organisation, and careers within the organisation. He spoke about investments made and future development, then welcomed questions from the group.</p> <p>DC asked about energy innovation at the new site at Glenlivet. Ross said it is the company's vision to be carbon neutral by 2030 and they have very little impact on landfill as most waste product is recycled back out to local farmland.</p> <p>The group queried if there had been a significant impact on the workforce with the investment. There is evidence to show that young people are not wanting to enter the industry. Ross explained there are hundreds of roles within the organisation that would utilise a variety of skills. He does a lot of work with schools and education groups with visits to distilleries to promote the industry as a profession.</p>	
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	Ross left the meeting at 10.20am.	
2.	<p>Meeting Note and Actions from June</p> <p>Tourism Business Improvement District (T-BID)</p> <p>SM said the campaign to receive a majority before the ballot was fully underway but still difficult to all. Each business is being contacted directly.</p> <p>The ballot result will be known by 17 January 2020.</p> <p>Business Accelerator</p> <p>DC confirmed the actions have been taken forward and the accelerator is underway.</p>	
3.	<p>Presentation on Local Development Plan (Gary Templeton)</p> <p>GT's presentation centred around Moray being the place to live, work and invest with a balance to safeguard the environment for the future. The purpose of the Local Development Plan (LDP) is to assess the need for housing and schools etc but the process of completing the plan takes 2.5 years from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence ▪ Main Issue Report ▪ Proposed Plan ▪ Examination (6-9 months) ▪ Adapt with modification (along with the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 2019) <p>Land for housing development is mainly on greenfield sites so there are restrictions in place. Over the past 5 years there has been between 309-380 new homes in the area per year and this brings with it social benefits and jobs. There is a difficulty in attracting high end builders for executive style homes but affordable housing is not an issue. GT stressed there needs to be better tenure integration between private and public renting. Steps will be taken to overcome barriers to access land for small development. DC commented that housing has an impact on the wider economy as we are trying to attract people in to the area. Land for employment was now increasing with Elgin Business Park. Future sites were needed.</p> <p>GT went on to say there are pressures with rural housing, windfarms and</p>	

	<p>infrastructure – especially the A96.</p> <p>The Elgin City Masterplan is in the early stages and looking at ways to reduce carbon.</p> <p>GT then invited any questions. DV asked if there have been any proposals to include cycle paths in any new improvements and A96?</p> <p>GT said that there had been serious consideration to access to public transport however walking and cycling networks could be promoted. JG commented that the Council had been lobbying for a route and it may be part-routed.</p> <p>DC asked what percentage of new homes are affordable housing? GT said that the target is 25% across each new site however, the Council have been committed to 50 homes per year but based on actual figures of 300+ new builds, about 70 have been built. EM commented that we need to get the message out about housing being available in Moray.</p> <p>GT said there is a changing trend in provision of new homes. There is now a requirement for smaller houses to be provided as the average occupancy is now 2.1 per household. EM suggested the development needs to be about the here and now and then progress to the future. We can commit to being carbon neutral in 20 years' time but the focus is about the development now. JG said it is part of the LDP – what needs to be delivered and how? However, long term planning was also needed. For example, in the future, what should the High Street look like and what services should be provided?</p> <p>SM said it would be useful to have statistics on new housing for example the number of buyers who are new to the area versus 1st time buyers and what impact that has on services. GT said that the housebuilders should know. GL suggested checking with the Assessors Officer for figures.</p> <p>GT went on to say that the Council works closely with the NHS to work out capacity but clarity on staffing is always an issue.</p> <p>SM commented that planning is a challenge for new businesses since the Council introduced a fee for consultation. JG confirmed there is no initial consultation fee charged but up to £1,500 fee will be applied for a pre-planning workshop.</p> <p>GL went on to say that the Council has a large industrial portfolio but the flood scheme has an impact. DC said that businesses and investors are looking for sites that are development ready and speculative build that is flexible is the way forward. GL confirmed that 93% of Council owned</p>	
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	<p>industrial property is in use and they are keeping up with demand on small units. He said that the local population are not aware of impacts of industrial estates and business parks on employment such as Forres Enterprise Park, but established employment is high, occupancy is full with further development planned. GL confirmed that unoccupied premises on the High Street is down from 18% to 8%. However, DC stated that a recent report highlighted many properties on the High Street are owned by foreign investment vehicles who do not necessarily have a local interest in development.</p> <p>JG confirmed that the Town Centre Grant has been useful in the level of rental. DC said the change in the High Street trends is still ongoing and asked how do we respond? JG stated that it will need investment and the levels are difficult with the landlords having no interest. DC said it would be about partnership and to pilot some new thinking. Council workshops will outline the issues and Masterplan projects. GT confirmed that invites would be going out very soon. DC said that HIE could potentially invest and GL confirmed that Hitrans would need to be involved.</p> <p>Action: GT to circulate LDP presentation</p> <p>Action: SM to contact Assessor's Office. GT to confirm figures with housebuilders</p> <p>Action: Moray Council to involve HIE on dates for planning workshops.</p> <p>GT left the meeting at 11.20am</p>	<p>GT</p> <p>SM/GT</p> <p>GT</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Moray Economic Strategy Working Groups Reporting</p> <p>Outcome 1 - JG said that the Skills Plan had been delivered. We need to understand where the gaps are, what industry wants and what can be delivered. There is a consortium to share knowledge at an operational level.</p> <p>Outcome 2 – DC indicated that the small business group had met and were focused on action. SM said that she would reach out to the HR network within the Chamber.</p> <p>DC went on to say that jobs are filled by family decisions and often not by individuals. Two jobs are often needed. We recognise what industry requires in terms of filling vacancies and from this what training courses are required to generate people with the right skills. SM suggested this could be part of CPD in current employment. DC said sometimes there needs to be tailored programmes, such as Gordon and MacPhail with UHI. It must be fit for purpose in industry. EM agreed it is ideal for his company to have a tailored programme.</p>	

	<p>Outcome 3 – DC presented the report on behalf of SS and touched on the decline in the number of people currently in apprenticeships. JG confirmed there are no detailed statistics to break down falling numbers. This required assessment by SDS. There needs to be more work with employers and schools to identify all opportunities. GL concurred that public and private sector needs to do more. DP agreed that figures across UHI need to be specific for the Moray region.</p> <p>Action: HR leads are meeting to discuss talent issues.</p> <p>Action: All parties to address apprenticeship issues. SDS to assess.</p>	<p>SM</p> <p>All/SS</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Development in Early Years and Childcare</p> <p>DC said there will be a change in legislation with a 90% increase in the number of hours of free childcare currently offered by August 2020. This will have an impact on smaller childcare companies in Moray who do not have the capacity to expand or innovate.</p> <p>EM suggested that businesses will have to get used to flexible working arrangements and change their operating models.</p> <p>GL commented that all providers have some capacity and capability. DC said margins are not sustainable in current models and childcare businesses need to increase revenue perhaps by introducing breakfast clubs and after school provision. DP said there is childcare provision at Moray College UHI but it is subsidised. There is a lack of qualified practitioners because the sector is expanding. GL confirmed that a recent recruitment drive saw 45 people employed by the Council in Early Years. DC said there needs to be at least 50 more to be recruited to meet with Council provision. She asked if the number coming through training will meet the public and private sector demand levels by 2020. The sector is important as an employer but also has knock-on effect on productive employment across Moray if there is a lack of childcare. JG suggested a case for a higher subsidy for Moray due to regional variation.</p> <p>Action: HIE to ask Jo Shirriffs to come to next meeting</p>	<p>DC</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Growth Deal Verbal Update</p> <p>JG advised the meeting that the Council are working closely with both UK and Scottish Governments to reach Heads of Terms for a Deal. JG tabled a summary paper not to be circulated further.</p>	

<p>7</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>Fair Work</p> <p>JG indicated this is a priority of the Scottish Government. There is great aspiration, but it is a difficult transition especially for small businesses because of rising costs. NA said that she does work with the Poverty Alliance so it would be good for JG to meet with the director to discuss how Fair Work can be implemented. DC said that Fair Work is an increasing feature but we need to clarify what Fair Work Duty is and what it means to businesses. What is the view of businesses? SM said we need to support the Living Wage but the Govt should be providing more help towards the basic costs businesses have to cover, such as rates. The Living Wage can be another cost. Accreditation is not required as it is seen as an additional expense for businesses.</p> <p>Action: To be discussed fully at next meeting.</p> <p>Brexit</p> <p>GL said the consequences are already happening. Need to share knowledge and discuss solutions at next meeting.</p>	<p>NA/JG</p> <p>All</p>
	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Thursday 12 December 2019 – 10am – Location TBC</p>	