

## Moray Economic Partnership

Thursday 5 October 2023 (MS Teams) 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Graham Leadbitter (Chair)	Moray Council (TMC)
Jim Grant	Moray Council
Chris Muir	Moray Council
Lorna Williamson	Moray Council
Marc Macrae	Moray Council
Sandy Keith	Moray Council
Amy Cruickshank	Moray Council – Moray Pathways
David Reid	Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)
Rona Campbell	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
David Patterson	UHI Moray
Fabio Villani	tsiMoray
Mike Duncan	Federation Small Business (FSB)
Sarah Medcraf	Moray Chamber of Commerce (MCC)
Stephen Sheridan	Skills Development Scotland (SDS)
Carol Wink (Minutes)	Highlands and Islands Enterprise

### Apologies

Rhona Gunn	Moray Council
Gary Templeton	Moray Council
Andrew Anderson	tsiMoray
Gemma Cruickshank	Visit Moray Speyside (VMS)

<b>1. Welcome</b> The Chair opened the meeting.	
<b>2. Minutes from last meeting</b> The Minute from 29 June 2023 was agreed.  <b>Update on actions</b> HIE gave an update on the HIE Strategy, Operating Plan, budgets and output targets for 2023/24. The HIE Strategy and Operating Plan are available on the HIE website:  <a href="https://www.hie.co.uk/media/vczc0zca/hie-strategy-2023-28-final-031023.pdf">https://www.hie.co.uk/media/vczc0zca/hie-strategy-2023-28-final-031023.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.hie.co.uk/media/12803/hie-operating-plan-2022.pdf">https://www.hie.co.uk/media/12803/hie-operating-plan-2022.pdf</a>  Other actions from the previous meeting were addressed at relevant stages in the agenda.	

### 3. Main Topics

#### **Business Support Sub-Group Update**

TMC presented the first quarterly update of the Business Support Sub-Group reporting on activity being undertaken across the priority areas of:

- the integrated approach to delivering the transition to net zero and community wealth building
- Supporting Productivity Growth

The update detailed progress being made to date and next steps to be taken.

TMC also reported on the loan funding scheme available through Moray Firth Credit Union (MFCU) to small/micro businesses who are struggling to access funds. A face-to-face consultation service and the simple Business Planning process enables MFCU to make quick lending decisions.

#### **Communities and Place Sub-Group Update**

TMC presented the quarterly update from the Communities and Place Sub-Group reporting on activity across the priority areas of:

- A sufficient labour market
- Integrated approach to delivering the transition to net zero and community wealth building
- Supporting Productive Growth

TMC reported that the first phase of Scotland's Census 2022 demonstrated that the number of 15-24 year olds in Moray has declined since the 2021 census and in order to assure that there is a sufficient labour market, the work currently being undertaken on developing a talent attraction and retention plan for Moray will be critical.

The Community Wealth Building Strategy will be reported to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services committee in December 2023.

#### **Childcare Update**

TMC reported that a short-life Childcare Working Group has been formed to continue gathering data following on from the Parents and Childcare Providers survey work recently undertaken. HIE has also prepared a Childcare Update Paper covering childcare in the Highlands and Islands Region which was presented to the Regional Economic Partnership (REP) in September 2023. This update paper has also been shared with Neil Gray, Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture and HIE has participated in dialogue with Scottish Ministers about the challenges in rural and remote childcare.

TMC reported that the Early Learning and Childcare Directorate has published a School Age Childcare Delivery Framework and a National Children’s Charter for School Age Childcare in Scotland in their effort to tackle child poverty, reduce inequalities for school age children and allowing parents and carers to enter into or sustain employment. TMC will provide more details on the Charter and Framework at the next MEP meeting.

Jointly, MEP partners have a strong lobbying voice which will provide the ideal opportunity to raise childcare issues at Regional Economic Partnership (REP) and Convention of the Highlands and Islands (COHI) level.

**Action: TMC will give an update on the School Age Childcare Delivery Framework and National Children’s Charter for School Age Childcare in Scotland at the next MEP meeting.**

#### **Communications Update**

TMC presented a paper outlining a refreshed comms protocol now that the MEP media services contract has come to an end. The Comms Sub-Group, including members from the comms teams within TMC, HIE and UHI Moray, will direct comms activity on behalf of the partnership, meaning there will be reduced capacity to deliver comms activity and as a result a reduced MEP comms function. Discussion that followed highlighted:-

- the value of concentrating on and developing the MyMoray website for attracting and retaining people to the Moray area
- Identifying target markets/age groups and how they access information
- Other sources of funding including from private sector
- the commission of local business rather than from out with the area

#### **Talent Attraction Discussion**

HIE opened the discussion on talent attraction referring back to the *Moray Economic Strategy – Priority: A Sufficient Labour Market (Talent Attraction and Retention) context paper* circulated at the March 2023 MEP meeting.

A working group made up of MEP members will be established to revisit this context paper, building on components already in place, and to identify what is required to drive forward the talent attraction and retention agenda. The role of the private sector will also play a significant role in delivering a solution at a local level by promoting career opportunities in addition to selling jobs. The initial meeting of this working group will take place early November-time and will report back to the MEP meeting in December.

The Scottish Government’s Talent Attraction and Migration Service (TAMS) is going through a procurement process ready for re-launch in 2024. In addition to supporting employers to use the immigration

	<p>system to help meet their skills needs by attracting and retaining workers and their families, the new TAMS digital platform will enable people to access good quality information and advice to help them to move to Scotland and settle into employment and the community.</p> <p><b>Action: HIE will organise the initial meeting of the Talent Attraction Working Group, to take place early November-time.</b></p> <p><b>Moray Pathways Local Employability Partnership Update</b> Moray Pathways presented the update on work undertaken over the last year by Moray Pathways Local Employability Partnership.</p> <p>An Apprenticeship Strategy has been developed and approved by the Community Planning Board. The continued commitment of all MEP partners will be essential to support the monitoring and delivery of this Strategy for Moray.</p> <p>UHI Moray reported that due to funding pressures and the reduced number of apprenticeship training places available, it has not been possible to provide places for the huge number of apprenticeship requests received.</p> <p>Moray Pathways reported on progress made over the year with some of the other activities they are involved in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Sector Based Work Programme provides pre-work placement vocational skills training before matching individuals to work opportunities within key growth industry sectors.</li> <li>• The Progress for Parents Programme helps parents in poverty to increase their household income by progressing into employment.</li> <li>• There is also a skills strategy group which aims to help align the skills framework to post school individuals up to the age of 67.</li> </ul> <p>All of these programmes depend on continued funding support. The shared voice of the MEP and Community Planning Partnership will help to provide a powerful lobbying voice for these programmes at a COHI and national level.</p>	
<p><b>4. Other Topics</b></p>	<p><b>MEP – Future Meetings</b> It was agreed that every second MEP meeting should take place in person, if possible. HIE Moray, Forres will host the December (in-person) meeting.</p> <p><b>MEP – Chair</b> Partners were asked to consider rotation of the Chair for future MEP meetings, also to consider a mix between public and private sector.</p>	

5.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>TMC and Highland Council have commissioned a joint study to demonstrate the local socio-economic benefit from wealth generated by the energy sector. MEP partners agreed to participate in the study. Results will be presented to COHI in due course.</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and brought the meeting to a close.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Date and Time of next meeting</b></p> <p><b>Thursday 14 December (2.00 – 4.00pm) - HIE Forres office (in-person)</b></p>	

<b>ACTIONS SUMMARY</b>		
	TMC will provide more detail on the School Age Childcare Delivery Framework and National Children’s Charter for School Age Childcare in Scotland at the next MEP meeting.	TMC
	HIE will arrange for the initial meeting of the Talent Attraction Working Group to take place early November-time.	HIE