

## **Moray Business Resilience Meeting**

**Thursday 30 July 2020 (Skype call)**

### **Action Points**

#### Attendees:

Donna Harper - MBWC  
Fiona Robb - HIE  
Gill Neill – Elgin BID  
Graham Leadbitter – Moray Council Laurie Piper – Moray Speyside Tourism  
Jan Bruce – SDS  
Jane Cumming – SCDI  
Jane Munro - DWP  
Laura Mitchell – on behalf of Richard Lochhead  
Michael O'Donnell – Moray Council  
Sarah Medcraf – Moray Chamber of Commerce  
Scott McKnockiter – HIE  
Stephen Sheridan – SDS  
Stuart Black - HIE

#### Apologies:

Craig Robertson – Business Gateway  
David Groundwater - FSB  
Douglas Ross - MP  
Fraser Grieve – SWA  
Jim Grant – Moray Council  
Richard Lochhead – MSP

1. Stuart Black opened meeting
2. Public Sector Update
  - a. Moray Council recently announced webinars, with the following groups: Moray Speyside Tourism, Moray Chamber of Commerce, Elgin Business Improvement District and Business Gateway. Webinars are not exclusive to particular business groups or sectors, and attendees can cross over to other webinars of interest, such as tourism businesses who also have an interest in the town centre. The aim is to discuss potential responses to the current situation to inform a report to council and strategy. It is planned to also promote the current business survey to webinar participants
  - b. HIE working with Business Gateway to fast-track a number of Gateway clients into HIE Account Management
  - c. Hotel Recovery Programme announced, which will open before the end of August 2020, and consists of £14m funding from Scottish Government (£9M of revenue support and £5M capital), plus bespoke packages of wrap-around business support provided by

Scotland's enterprise agencies and their partners. Hotels must have more than 50 employees to be eligible

- d. HIE awaiting details in relation to further supporting community funds. Development Officer Network meeting noted huge volunteer effort which is still underway to support communities around issues with hardship, redundancies and social care
- e. Concern has been highlighted around Scottish Government funding ending in September, and HIE will continue to feed back the ongoing funding requirement to government
- f. HIE approved a contribution towards an Elgin Town Centre project, through Elgin BID, to provide safe open spaces for town centre visitors
- g. A number of ongoing PACE situations developing in Moray over the past ten days, including in the tourism industry due to a downturn in business and functions. Other examples include a mix of retail and recreational businesses
- h. SDS are awaiting information from other potential redundancy situations from retailers and construction businesses and are beginning to look at targeted groups of other sectors at risk, considering a range of interventions to support
- i. DWP have prepared a press release to provide employers and employees information about PACE and how to access support, which will be published across a range of local press titles, to respond to some of the current myths which are circulating about redundancies
- j. Virtual jobs fair held on Thursday 30th July, that focused on the care sector and showcased 45 job vacancies. The event was published widely and enjoyed significant coverage and impact on social media channels
- k. DWP are in the process of starting some new training courses, focusing on the construction sector, looking at health and safety for employees, and Security Industry Authority accredited training, where some particular issues concerning door stewards due to social distancing regulations, which may not be able to take place
- l. A new training programme is being implemented - AB56 Futures, is a six-week programme focusing on early learning and childcare, primarily targeted at a youth employment, but also available to older participants
- m. DYW Moray have offered an employer to conduct mock interviews for 18/24-year-old job seekers
- n. DWP are also in the process of working up a grant application for a community hub via the Moray Pathways website, to highlight opportunities available in Moray
- o. Reorganisation of the pedestrian areas in Elgin had presented numerous challenges. Councillors have explored many options, which can impact both positively and negatively for individual businesses and other areas around Elgin. There are limits as to how much outdoor space can be provided, due to emergency access required and the nature of how the streets and movement of people interact

### 3. Private Sector Update

- a. Support for the Hotel Recovery programme although concerns about possible redundancies in the tourism sector
- b. Town centre businesses comfortable with the requirements and getting used to the new way of working. Customers are generally complying with social distancing measures
- c. Plans for non-essential offices to remain closed until mid-September is disappointing and the impacts this potentially could have with reduced footfall in Elgin town centre where

businesses rely on office workers for lunch time purchases. They had hoped to see an increase in footfall to the town centre with customers acclimatising to the new regulations and becoming more confident to visit the High Street area

- d. Road closures in Elgin town centre had caused a mix of opinions from the business community. Moray Council are listening to concerns caused by the road closures and actioning to alleviate issues
- e. Some new retail shops have recently opened in Elgin town centre. However, a number of businesses are closing, some of which are related to the downturn in economic activity resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, or natural turnover of businesses
- f. Possibility to promote the new businesses through the My Moray website
- g. Positive news stories coming out from businesses who have exceeded business growth targets, along with those have been nominated for regional and national awards. Moray Business Women are planning a member event on 19th August 2020 titled Ask the Expert
- h. There is a lack of capacity of restaurants and activities which are open to support tourism with the rise of people now taking breaks and holidays locally
- i. A number of distilleries are reopening visitor centres in a phased approach, and others do not plan to reopen. Important for visitors to know if tourism operators are open or closed and encourage businesses to add or update listings on the Moray Speyside Tourism Website, which is open to all
- j. Moray Speyside Tourism are implementing a “test and protect” platform to enable visitors to check in to businesses instantly. The platform will record information for 21 days, to support NHS track and trace initiatives, information on visitors can be securely accessed and then will be automatically deleted to comply with GDPR requirements. The success of the platform relies on tourism operators utilising it, and that any business who has a requirement to record details of their customers should take advantage of the system. There is no cost to the business, who gain access to a dashboard to access information, and also a QR code for promoting the service
- k. Sky TV targeted advertisements and social media engagement is planned for a consumer activation campaign in September 2020, in preparation for the October holidays. Moray Speyside Tourism were reluctant to market the region too early, and now is the right time to undertake marketing activities. Visit Scotland have been marketing nationally, which also has featured Moray
- l. Moray Speyside Tourism are issuing invoices for bid levy payers. Whilst they recognise that customers are experiencing issues with cashflow, the Bid is legally enforced, and invoices must now be issued
- m. A similar issue has arisen with licensing where the Council also has to raise invoices

#### 4. AOB

- a. No other business

#### **Date and time of next meeting**

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2.00pm – 3.00pm**