

Moray Business Resilience Meeting

Thursday 9 April 2020 (Skype call)

Action Points

Attendees:

Cllr Graham Leadbitter – Moray Council
Jim Grant – Moray Council
Michael O'Donnell – Moray Council
Douglas Ross - MP
Jane Cumming - SCDI
Sarah Medcraf – Moray Chamber of Commerce
Donna Harper – MBWC on behalf of Clare Lock
Stuart Black - HIE
Fiona Robb - HIE
Scott McKnockiter - HIE
Craig Robertson – Business Gateway
David Groundwater - FSB
Gill Neill – Elgin BID
Laurie Piper – Speyside Tourism

Apologies:

None – all attended

1. Stuart Black opened meeting and thanked everyone for their time, round table introductions followed
2. Actions from previous meeting.
 - a. 351 grant application received up to 31st March have been processed and payment date of 15th April has been brought forward to this week. Potentially C3,000 applications to process. Moray Council chasing up any incomplete applications
 - b. Moray Council to notify applicants when payment should be expected. Payment days are Wednesdays and Fridays
3. Local Business Updates
 - a. CBILS scheme is now prioritising people based on financial reserves they have and funds can be assessed within 7-10 days rather than the 12 week turnaround
 - b. Meeting with Fergus Ewing was positive and proactive towards local businesses. Still more questions need answering especially with reference to the anomalies for self-catering businesses under UK and Scottish Govts
 - c. Reminder of the Moray Chamber of Commerce workshop on Wednesday 15th April
 - d. Announcements are going out quickly to keep everyone updated and need to keep this momentum up and send out additional funding options
 - e. Reassurance to businesses that everything is being done
 - f. Elgin BID survey highlighted that very few businesses have had to make staff redundant

- g. Tracking eligibility for local businesses and encouraging all to apply. More to be done to promote the grants available. Moray Council to announce PR on MyMoray website. Payments are going out and urge businesses to keep applying. Can email the rates team directly to check eligibility
 - h. Moray Council to make the application form clear to highlight the requirement to submit bank statements to speed up process
 - i. Promote communication to alleviate the pressure on Moray Council receiving too many phone calls
 - j. Clarify whether a personal or business bank account is required to submit payments
 - k. There is an increased number of bank lenders now which is speeding up the process
 - l. HMRC will be in contact with FSB to update the payroll procedures
 - m. Survey carried out by SCDI a few weeks ago had already noted a drop in tourism at that time
 - n. Suggestion that corporate businesses can assist SMEs with legal advice and share business to business
 - o. Concerns that leaseholder businesses are falling through the net as it is only the ratepayer who can apply for grants
 - p. Online training for web access being provided by Cisco
 - q. Mixed response to CBILS. Some businesses still being offered alternative loans at 18.9%
 - r. BG offering webinars and national campaign to offer support
 - s. Online webinar for food and drink industries being offered to help businesses diversify (details sent separately)
 - t. Applications for Supporting Communities Fund have been received from 9 umbrella organisations in Moray. William Grant Foundation and SSE are also offering community funding (details of further funding sent separately)
 - u. Need to identify those still falling through the gaps and liaising with other local authorities to identify groups
 - v. Concerns and public perception that distilleries are classed as non-essential food producers and not closing although production is down 50%. Need for these organisations to be up and running to meet all future order requirements as long as it is safe to do so
4. Public Sector Update
- a. Appreciation that the council are getting grants out quicker than expected
 - b. HMRC system has now been built and is currently being tested before being rolled out w/c 20th April. The system is equipped with getting out 11M applications per day. 1,000 more staff are being trained to use the system. Companies should be able to apply 14 days in advance weekly/monthly.
 - c. Working towards providing figures nationally
 - d. Employees are raising concerns that not all companies adhering to social distancing
5. Agreed next meeting to be in 1 week's time after Easter bank holiday
6. AOB
- a. HIE working on behalf of Scottish Enterprise Research Service to answer up to 600 calls per day with enquiries. At its peak 3,000 calls were received

Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 16th April 2.00pm – 3.00pm