

## **Moray Business Resilience Meeting**

**Thursday 2 July 2020 (Skype call)**

### **Action Points**

#### Attendees:

Cllr Graham Leadbitter – Moray Council  
Stuart Black - HIE  
Michael O'Donnell – Moray Council  
Jim Grant – Moray Council  
Sarah Medcraf – Moray Chamber of Commerce  
Donna Harper - MBWC  
Fiona Robb - HIE  
Craig Robertson – Business Gateway  
Gill Neill – Elgin BID  
Fraser Grieve – SWA  
Jan Bruce – SDS  
David Groundwater - FSB  
Laurie Piper – Moray Speyside Tourism  
Stephen Sheridan - SDS  
Scott McKnockiter – HIE  
Richard Lochhead – MSP  
Doug MacKenzie – on behalf of Douglas Ross - MP  
Leona Williamson - DWP

#### Apologies:

Douglas Ross - MP  
Jane Cumming – SCDI

1. Stuart Black opened meeting
2. Public Sector Update
  - a. HIE have been dealing with appeals for the PERF and Hardship funds. Applicants have 10 days from the date of receiving their notification to appeal. Final date to lodge an appeal is 4<sup>th</sup> July although HIE hope that they have now captured all of those eligible for appeal
  - b. HIE working on alternative means of support for any businesses that have fallen through the net
  - c. Those owning B&Bs who did not originally qualify for the Hardship Fund – usually because they did not have a business bank account - had been signposted to the new B&B fund although here has been very little take up on this. Fund due to close on 10<sup>th</sup> July
  - d. Moray Council have received a total of 1930 application for non domestic rates. 11 have applied on Phase 3 of which 7 have been rejected

- e. New growth funding scheme for businesses with projected growth potential was announced by Kate Forbes. Fund could be up to £300k per organisation made up with £60k grants and £240k equity investment. There are businesses in Moray which could potentially benefit from this
- f. A further £500M support package has been announced by UKG for English Councils. Barnett formula could mean Moray Council could receive in the region of £800k but has not been agreed officially yet. There is cross party support for additional grant funding for businesses. Council is cautious to announce funding decisions in case any further UKG funding is announced that supersedes LA funding. Emergency cabinet meeting at beginning of August to consider business grants further
- g. Moray Council working on a potential £5M deficit and the financial position is very tight. Parking charges have been reintroduced after many discussions and very careful consideration

### 3. Private Sector Update

- a. Businesses trying their best to operate but social distancing very difficult
- b. Concern about parking charges being reintroduced in Elgin town centre as 1. a safety concern touching machines, coins and tickets and 2. as a barrier to trade. Businesses are anxious
- c. FSB are receiving lots of questions relating to re-opening and guidance. Most businesses are operating a phased-in approach with flexible furlough still important
- d. Greener Recovery Plan noted
- e. Ensure that all businesses who are able to apply for funding have done so and if there is any funding left, is there a contingency to assist any businesses that are forced to close again?
- f. HMRC/DWP webinar to follow on 8<sup>th</sup> July <https://www.fsb.org.uk/event-calendar/furlough-scheme-employment-questions.html>
- g. Retail sector have been open and feedback is positive. More relaxation of the guidelines announced by FM
- h. Face masks to be worn in all shops from 10<sup>th</sup> July should give a bit more confidence to consumers and staff
- i. Self catering properties are preparing to open and seeing strong advance bookings. Unclear guidance on multiple families holidaying together though. Hotels not being booked as much. Issues with visitors from England cancelling bookings due to fears that the borders will close
- j. Moray Speyside Tourism in contact with Levy payers as invoices are due to go out shortly
- k. Now a coordinated message that tourists can visit with confidence with assurance from hoteliers and owners
- l. Diageo have launched their hospitality fund with a soft launch for community mentor portal to help smaller companies with risk assessments, PPE, and build relationship with staff especially in the hospitality sector. The reduction to 1m distancing doesn't cover distilleries and visitor centres. Complexity of 2m rule is challenging preventing re-opening. Most distilleries are now up and running with a focus on a personal responsibility
- m. No further PACE updates locally but nationally it is a worse picture. Individual Training Accounts (ITA) have now been launched but places are limited to just 14,000 so need to

register ASAP. The ITA fund, of up to £200, to help towards training and learning costs through MyWorldofWork. Reskilling info to come soon

- n. DWP will map out a vision to see where potential gaps are and what vacancies will look like to target skills and young people. During this time. they have been in contact with clients over the phone or through Universal Credit journals. Jobs still in place as long as furlough lasts and there is optimism from self employed to get back to work. Partners to get together to jointly fund things going forwards. Data on self employed is available through stat-xplorer website where categories can drill down by sector

4. AOB

- a. News of a potential Covid issues with RAF Lossiemouth contractors hit the media but NHS testing results proved negative
- b. SG Oversight group looking at final application for Supporting Communities Funding. HIE proposal to SG to deliver next phase of funding
- c. E-Commerce is starting to pick up
- d. Enquiries from businesses looking for new premises at Enterprise Park Forres is encouraging

**Date and time of next meeting**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2.00pm – 3.00pm**