

## **Moray Business Resilience Meeting**

**Thursday 11 June 2020 (Skype call)**

### **Action Points**

#### Attendees:

Cllr Graham Leadbitter – Moray Council  
Stuart Black - HIE  
Michael O'Donnell – Moray Council  
Stephen Sheridan - SDS  
Fiona Robb - HIE  
Craig Robertson – Business Gateway  
Gill Neill – Elgin BID  
Jane Cumming – SCDI  
Fraser Grieve – SWA  
Scott McKnockiter – HIE  
Doug MacKenzie – on behalf of Douglas Ross MP

#### Apologies:

Jim Grant – Moray Council  
Richard Lochhead – MSP  
Douglas Ross – MP  
Laurie Piper – Moray Speyside Tourism  
Sarah Medcraf – Moray Chamber of Commerce  
Donna Harper - MBWC  
David Groundwater - FSB

1. Stuart Black opened meeting
2. Public Sector Update
  - a. Phase 3 of the Non-Domestic Rates funding is now open for tenants and those who have multiple properties with a value of £18k per property, the cap has been lifted to £500k. March 2021 deadline has been brought forward to 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020. This is to be communicated to businesses in a press release from Moray Council
  - b. Just under 1800 applications received by Moray Council for Phase 1 and Phase 2 with £15.66M and £1M paid out respectively
  - c. Hardship and PERF funds now coming to an end. Unsuccessful PERF applicants can now request a call back from HIE. Further information can be taken into consideration for an appeal. 120 appeals have been received by HIE to date (including some Moray businesses)
  - d. There has been a delay in getting the decisions out to applicants as there was a higher than expected volume of applications received and detailed investigations required to satisfy eligibility criteria. Unfortunately, there were just too many applications and not

- enough funding available to satisfy everyone. The target is to have all decisions for Hardship and PERF to be sent out by Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June
- e. New B&Bs funding guidelines and application form will be ready for launch on Moray Council website on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June. This fund is for a maximum of £3k and B&Bs with a non-business bank account will be able to apply
  - f. The Newly Self Employed Hardship fund closes on 30<sup>th</sup> June

### 3. Private Sector Update

- a. Pending the SG announcement on 18th June, businesses are preparing to be in a position to open in Phase 2, such as how to socially distance in the workplace
- b. Moray Council in discussions on how to open Elgin and other towns safely and alleviate any anxiety
- c. ElginBID hosting webinars in conjunction with Moray Wellbeing Hub to support staff to feel secure
- d. Call for national support for businesses such as extension to PPE being zero-rated and for local suppliers to support the network with PPE. The cost of implementing changes, such as additional cleaning, has an impact both financially and on time and UK wide support required to assist everyone. This is to be fed back to UK Government via local MP
- e. A survey has been circulated to businesses encouraging them what they need in terms of support/movement/space. This is to be fed back to Moray Council
- f. Disappointment that the closing date for NDR relief has been brought forward to 10<sup>th</sup> July. This is considered unfair as businesses have not had the opportunity to examine the impact of COVID-19 on their finances
- g. Following the tourism announcement business are considering methods to open but there is a worrying number of job losses especially amongst the larger hotel chains
- h. Restricted operation capacity with social distancing. For example, trains and ferries can only operate at 17% capacity observing a 2m distance; Tourism 30% operational at 2m distancing and 70% operational at 1m distancing. This is a challenge, especially in distilleries that were never designed that way and cannot be adapted easily
- i. Local distilleries producing the equivalent of 2.5 bottles of hand sanitiser per household and will continue to do so
- j. Environmental Health are beginning to get requests coming through. ElginBID are hosting and recording a webinar on 15<sup>th</sup> June with Environmental Health represented. Invitation for businesses to submit questions to put to EH beforehand
- k. Risk Assessment webinar to be hosted by ElginBID on 24<sup>th</sup> June. Hope to provide a package of support for local businesses
- l. Limitations on accommodation, such as the requirement to purchase additional bedding and a minimum of 2 night stay being considered to reduce the turnover of occupancy. Some B&Bs reporting they will not even be opening as they cannot meet the additional costs
- m. SDS has launched a Grant Scheme for Modern Apprenticeship (MA) and Employability Fund (EF) learning and training providers who continue to work with apprentices, employers and learners during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Grant-in-Aid scheme offers eligible SDS contract holders who are continuing to deliver contracted services a capped monthly grant payment covering April to June 2020. Further details available at [apprenticeships.scot](http://apprenticeships.scot) website.

4. AOB

- a. HIE distributed a further £146,074 Supporting Communities Funding to 5 of the Moray anchor organisations. A total of £374,168 of SCF has been distributed as per table in Appendix 1. Further case studies can be found below:

<https://www.hie.co.uk/support/browse-all-support-services/covid19/covid19thirdsector/findhornresponse/>

<https://www.hie.co.uk/lossieandhopeman>

[www.hie.co.uk/covid19thirdsector](http://www.hie.co.uk/covid19thirdsector)

**Date and time of next meeting**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2.00pm – 3.00pm**