

Moray Business Resilience Meeting

Thursday 25 June 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
Clare Lock - MBWC
Fiona Robb - HIE
Craig Robertson – Business Gateway
Gill Neill – Elgin BID
Jane Cumming – SCDI
Fraser Grieve – SWA
Jan Bruce – SDS
Richard Lochhead - MSP

Apologies:

David Groundwater - FSB
Laurie Piper – Moray Speyside Tourism
Douglas Ross - MP
Stephen Sheridan - SDS
Scott McKnockiter – HIE

1. Stuart Black opened meeting
2. Public Sector Update
 - a. HIE going back to applicants of the PERF who have appealed for additional information. Hardship applicants being asked to submit their 6 month cashflow to be checked over for a potentially more positive outcome
 - b. New funding announced for high growth start ups – Early Stage Growth Challenge Fund. Details to follow
 - c. Moray Council have received over 1900 applications for business grants and very few applications in Phase 3
 - d. Low uptake on the B&B fund and many not qualifying. Possibility of looking at the underspend and redeploying the funds where required.
 - e. Business Gateway receiving lots of enquires for new ventures, growth, digitalisation and companies looking at other opportunities. There will be new ways to support businesses.

- f. Some local organisations are investing in research and development projects so there is a positive outlook
 - g. There has been cross party support for proposed pedestrianisation plans with Moray Council Transport. Everyone appreciates that roads have to close to enable businesses to operate, although some taxi ranks may be disadvantaged to allow full pedestrianisation of the town
 - h. Environmental Health are in touch with hospitality providers to ensure they are operating within the guidelines. Local manufacturing and industrial sites have already been in contact but will have further scrutiny applied due to a recent outbreak of Covid-19 in one factory
 - i. Potential for new funding possibilities agreed by Moray Council
3. Private Sector Update
- a. ElginBID have been hosting webinars in conjunction with Moray Council involving Environmental Health and Transport departments. Businesses are ensuring they have done all they need to do prior to re-opening. Gill expressed thanks to the Council who are doing an “amazing job, taking ideas on board from a survey of local businesses and listening to members”. Businesses are able to do things in a sensible way and can feed questions through ElginBID beforehand to take to the Council webinars
 - b. Indicative opening dates are welcomed however, not all businesses are able to open yet and will need additional support. Will not know consumer confidence until we are in the middle of it all. Keeping in contact with Minister for Business for UKG to get a national overview
 - c. Retail and manufacturing getting ready to open
 - d. Some businesses with directors are still not able to get funding. Moray Chamber are reporting back to SG to address gaps in funding
 - e. Diageo have announced a £4M support package and will work with bars and restaurants to identify the areas of support required. Funding could be available via application to help towards wage costs. Other funding will be identified to purchase specialist PPE, equipment, H&S expertise, online packages, mentoring, etc. Also to assist visitor centre to support tourism
 - f. Lots of work going on in the background to communicate with communities to alleviate concerns and reassure locally, nationally and worldwide, however, there are still pockets of resistance. The message should be that Moray is open for business when the time is right. Self-catering properties will be opening from 3rd July and there will be more activity from that date. It will be dynamic and gather momentum from the opening date of 11th July for other sectors
 - g. E-commerce facility for local attractions to book tickets online to be explored
 - h. PACE receiving an increase in enquiries relating to redundancies and working to identify potential pockets of unemployment to address concerns direct with employers and employees. Expecting to have a more high profile presence once furlough stops. PACE is providing free and confidential service promoting MyWorldofWork, an online portal and Individual Training Accounts
 - i. Moray is 2nd only to the Highlands with the highest number of staff on furlough. There has been a significant increase in Universal Credit applications in Moray with an additional 1,340 claiming benefits and redundancies tend to be more from the retail sector. Statistics and trends are unpredictable as those businesses who were original

showing high growth potential are no longer demonstrating and vice versa. PACE will continue to work with Job Centres to gather intelligence.

4. AOB

- a. Supporting Communities Fund had one last application to update their funding request to include further areas. HIE have proven that they can work quickly and adapt to distribute funding on the ground immediately. No guarantees that HIE will be administering Phase 2 recovery funding as there are additional partners to consider.
- b. Members noted that Gill has resigned from her position with ElginBID and members thanked her for her contributions to the Business Resilience Forum and wish her every success for the future.

Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 2nd July 2.00pm – 3.00pm