

Moray Business Resilience Meeting

Thursday 23 July 2020 (Skype call)

Action Points

Attendees:

Michael O'Donnell – Moray Council
Clare Lock - MBWC
Fraser Grieve – SWA
Laurie Piper – Moray Speyside Tourism
Jane Munro - DWP
Fiona Robb - HIE
Stuart Black - HIE
David Groundwater - FSB
Doug Mackenzie – on behalf of Douglas Ross
Sarah Medcraf – Moray Chamber of Commerce

Apologies:

Douglas Ross - MP
Jane Cumming – SCDI
Scott McKnockiter – HIE
Cllr Graham Leadbitter – Moray Council
Jim Grant – Moray Council
Gill Neill – Elgin BID
Jan Bruce – SDS
Richard Lochhead – MSP
Craig Robertson – Business Gateway

1. Stuart Black opened meeting
2. Public Sector Update
 - a. Moray Economic Partnership will be hosting a number of workshops between 3-14 August focusing on the Recovery Strategy where partners are asked to participate
 - b. Business Survey still live on Moray Council website for response
 - c. Final figures for PERF: 106 applications received, 28 approved with a total of £1.2M funding released. Hardship Fund: 68 applications received, 28 approved to the value of £266k. Almost £1.5M in total released to local businesses. HIE working with businesses who did not qualify to assist with other forms of funding
3. Private Sector Update
 - a. Moray Chamber of Commerce webinar with Richard Lochhead has sold out

- b. Scottish Chambers are releasing some funding for a recovery project to provide a hub of expert support for local businesses to sign up for free advice eg accountancy/H&S/etc.
- c. Scotland Towns funding supporting businesses and consumers to work cohesively in restoring confidence
- d. A very bleak picture with regards to redundancies although not of sufficient scale (20+ employees) to invoke PACE process yet
- e. JCP to encourage employers who may be looking at making redundancies to contact them as JCP can support part-time hours with a top up of Universal Credit rather than making redundant
- f. Funding is available to help the younger population into work although now is not the right time for businesses to take on trainees
- g. Those who require support with IT equipment or accessing online resources to be supported at a local level. Partners to assist in identifying the appropriate access centres
- h. Virtual jobsfair advert to be re-Tweeted and advertised
- i. Pedestrianisation in Elgin town centre very welcomed and working well for businesses there
- j. Concern about transaction fees for card payment readers although this needs to be compared to bank charges for handling cash transactions. Case studies to go to Douglas Ross
- k. Confidence still low although many businesses not jumping straight into normal action and community sentiment calming
- l. Test and Protect scheme not widely known or understood. Media campaign stepped up to post on social media and tv advertising
- m. Learning from other towns who have imposed local lockdowns
- n. FSB hosting a webinar in conjunction with GrowBiz on 18th August discussing how to use Zoom effectively to keep in contact with customers and clients
- o. Result of a survey on business confidence due to be released by FSB
- p. Tourism industry has picked up with self catering busy. Some hotels reporting as low as 10% occupancy, and some saying their bookings are only 20% down on previous year
- q. Traffic light system in place to show what tourist attractions are open
- r. Good publicity on the Visit Scotland TV advert campaign with 2 Moray attractions highlighted. Further advertising due in September for the October break
- s. 167 businesses have now signed up to the Good to Go scheme
- t. Distillery visitor centre are bringing forward their opening plans with 3 already open in Moray and a further 5 due to open shortly
- u. Tariffs are still the biggest threat to whisky exports and the potential of blended scotch and gin to come under the same category for imposed tariffs is not welcomed. SWA campaigning to stop this
- v. Difficulty in predicting footfall in the hospitality industry and this is affecting operating margins

4. AOB

- a. HIE awaiting details of the next stage of the Supporting Communities Fund

Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 30th July 2.00pm – 3.00pm