

Moray Business Resilience Meeting

Thursday 18 June 2020 (Skype call)

Action Points

Attendees:

Cllr Graham Leadbitter – Moray Council
Stuart Black - HIE
Michael O'Donnell – Moray Council
Jim Grant – Moray Council
Laurie Piper – Moray Speyside Tourism
Sarah Medcraf – Moray Chamber of Commerce
Donna Harper - MBWC
David Groundwater - FSB
Laura Mitchell – on behalf of Richard Lochhead
Stephen Sheridan - SDS
Fiona Robb - HIE
Craig Robertson – Business Gateway
Donna Harper - MBWC
Gill Neill – Elgin BID
Jane Cumming – SCDI
Fraser Grieve – SWA
Scott McKnockiter – HIE

Apologies:

Richard Lochhead – MSP
Douglas Ross - MP

1. Stuart Black opened meeting
2. Public Sector Update
 - a. Most applicants for PERF and Hardship grants will have now heard their outcome. All unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal can request contact by a member of HIE and further information can be taken into consideration to appeal a decision. Companies can make an appeal through findbusinesssupport.gov.scot. HIE will contact Hardship applicants to work through any errors on the cashflows to try to resolve. An independent review of appeals will be carried out within 10 working days
 - b. Moray Council have now received 2857 applications and approved 1587 with approximately 100 outstanding. There has not been a large uptake in the Phase 3 applications – it may be that these businesses do not realise they are eligible
 - c. BG working through the applications for the newly launched B&B fund this week, although very few do not fall into the narrow categories. This is to be fed back to MSPs to open up the eligibility criteria

- d. Those who have already applied and been approved for Hardship fund are now not eligible to claim for the B&B fund at a higher rate. Applicants have 3 days to accept the Hardship fund offer and can appeal if they wish to pursue the B&B fund
- e. Additional capital spend support package of £230M has been announced by SG
- f. MEP will distribute a survey to compare Moray against the national picture. Hope to cover a broad range as possible and identify gaps in provision. Education and childcare are the main concern along with hospitality and construction. Plea to encourage businesses to take time to complete survey as it is essential for the Action Plan going forward. In addition, it was suggested that certain sectors working groups are convened. Members invited to feed back on the survey by close of play Monday 22nd June
- g. Awaiting decision by SG on any surplus funds to support local grant schemes for those who have fallen through the gaps

3. Private Sector Update

- a. Following the First Minister's announcement of Phase 2, there are still some sectors not allowed to open yet which is causing some conflict
- b. Councillors to meet with communities to gauge interest in re-opening. Moray Chamber survey suggests 50/50 split whether businesses and locals are ready to welcome tourists back. There needs to be a conflict resolution as the further out of Elgin, the more concern there appears to be
- c. Some employees happy to continue with furlough until the funding runs out
- d. Webinars being set up by Moray Chamber to cover employment law and furlough
- e. Many businesses waiting for exact guidelines to be able to make any amendments to their premises. They do not have the cash upfront to invest in additional equipment so any supplementary support welcomed from any local suppliers. The NorthernBID network are asking for assistance with PPE and measures to enable essential companies to access all they need at a reduced rate and in a timely manner to meet minimum standards
- f. Still a push to allow those premises with rateable values of £51k to be able to claim some rates relief and others falling through gaps
- g. Certain businesses still not able to open – especially in shopping centres or those who do not have their own entrance/exit
- h. Concern of too many surveys doing the rounds. Members to work collaboratively to issue surveys to feed back to individual organisations for further analysis
- i. Worries around childcare funded places with no dates yet announced for opening of childcare centres. Moray Council to confirm dates
- j. Definitive guidelines need to be published, especially for the tourism sector and a unification on messaging amongst distilleries
- k. Lots of enquiries coming into FSB relating to legal position and contracts
- l. Webinar being set up by FBS with SG, H&S and Environmental Health represented
- m. Many distillery visitor centres cannot operate with social distancing in place. They want to drive tourism, not prevent it and work with the hospitality sector. Guidelines will be published by a working group and survey results out at the end of the month to ascertain where they are and what needs to be done
- n. SDS have launched individual training accounts with a £2.8M fund
- o. PACE enquiries set up and suggested that Jan Bruce attends future meetings in order for redundancies to be addressed

4. AOB

- a. Have to work with local agencies to address issue of aggressive seagulls in the town centres if more public space is to be opened up
- b. An additional application for Supporting Communities Fund has been received to cover the area of Portgordon/Llanbryde/Garmouth and Kingston. There is now representation for the whole of Moray in Phase 1 of the fund. Phase 2 (Recovery) will be opening soon and criteria to follow
- c. Two additional councillors to join MEP for a wider representation

Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 25th June 2.00pm – 3.00pm