

Moray Business Resilience Meeting

Thursday 4 June 2020 (Skype call)

Action Points

Attendees:

Cllr Graham Leadbitter – Moray Council
Jim Grant – Moray Council
Richard Lochhead – MSP
Stuart Black - HIE
Laurie Piper – Moray Speyside Tourism
Sarah Medcraf – Moray Chamber of Commerce
Clare Lock - MBWC
Fiona Robb - HIE
Craig Robertson – Business Gateway
Gill Neill – Elgin BID
David Groundwater - FSB
Jane Cumming – SCDI
Fraser Grieve – SWA
Scott McKnockiter – HIE

Apologies:

Douglas Ross – MP
Michael O'Donnell – Moray Council
Stephen Sheridan - SDS

1. Stuart Black opened meeting
2. Public Sector Update
 - a. To date £1M has been approved to pay out on the PERF grant with an average pay out of £41k. Appraisals still coming through but now tailing off. Appeals process will include a phone number to call to be able to discuss individual cases
 - b. C70 applications received for Creative, Tourism and Hospitality funds in Moray
 - c. Moray Council have received 1554 applications for funding, of which 1353 have been approved and 158 rejected
 - d. Businesses who did not previously qualify for non-domestic business rates relief, such as sub-leasers will be able to apply for Phase 3 of Small Business Grants
 - e. Self Employed Hardship Fund due to close on 12th June
 - f. New grant scheme available to allow smaller B&Bs to apply if they do not have a business bank account and have been rejected from the Creative, Tourism and Hospitality Hardship fund if they have no business bank account
 - g. The Business Support grant may close earlier than expected but there will be communication about this to follow
3. Private Sector Update

- a. Moray Chamber of Commerce have been working on behalf of the region, not just their members. They will be hosting a webinar to share best practise amongst organisations to help smaller companies
 - b. Council funded nursery places have been opened up and running for keyworkers but also will support those who can return to work
 - c. Support needs to be put in place to help and guide export organisations and guidance for manufacturing industry. The Export Advisory Service, funded by Scottish Enterprise, will be replaced by Scottish Development International taking some of the work in house with trade services
 - d. Need to take an audit of the gaps and support we can offer organisations and work collaboratively. This will be included in the Moray Council Action Plan
 - e. Many thanks to Moray Council who have taken an enabling approach to get licenses up and running for business to be able to operate effectively – it has been an excellent support
 - f. Concerns that certain businesses are trading and offering appointments to visit the their stores and this has led to some ill-feeling amongst similar industries. Clarification required on which stores should or should not be opening as “essential” under the guidelines which are open to interpretation. The onus is on the individual businesses to take heed of SG advice and to observe Environmental Health law and social distancing. Larger organisations have the benefit of in-house H&S advisors to conduct risk assessments. There are specific retail types listed that cannot open.
 - g. Questions whether the guidance is clear for smaller businesses to be able to get back to work as their larger counterparts have done. SG guidance is clear and allows for a certain degree of flexibility but the scale of increased activity may potentially lead to the risk of a 2nd wave of the virus
 - h. More guidance for retail outlets (eg use of screens) can be sought from ehadmin@moray.co.uk
 - i. International trade is being monitored in the distilling industry and liaising with world teams to learn and be able to support trade
 - j. Concerns are being raised regarding tourism and communities. There needs to be an understanding that in due course tourists are needed to get the economy growing again. We need to consult with the communities, to understand their fears and address their concerns. Moray Council is developing ways to communicate and meetings are to be set up
 - k. International travel and business travel into Inverness Airport is a concern. Views are welcomed for appetite for international travel. HIAL is undertaking a survey
4. AOB
- a. Communities funding has been extended to 3 anchor organisations with projects that were originally due to finish in July, will now extend to September. Others are being reviewed by SG oversight panel. A further two assessments are being carried out to enable more money in the community

Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 11th June 2.00pm – 3.00pm