

Moray Business Resilience Meeting

Monday 27 April 2020 (Skype call)

Action Points

Attendees:

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

Apologies:

None – all attended

1. Stuart Black opened meeting and thanked everyone for their time, round table introductions followed
2. Actions from previous meeting.
 - a. Update from Moray Council, 1105 applications received, 871 paid with a value of £9.625M.
 - b. 23 rejections processed
3. Local Business Updates
 - a. CBILS applications will remain open for 6 months to 6th September. Amendment to online form to help smaller businesses will open from 4th May
 - b. Certain businesses, such as vehicle workshops, not eligible to apply for rates relief due to initial valuation on rates register. Further scrutiny required to check status eg. whether classed as workshop or retail. Specific cases to be referred to James Taylor at Moray Council. All businesses should be assessed on 3 principles: loss of business/loss of jobs/loss to the economy. Moray Council to liaise with other local authorities for a consistent approach

- c. Encouraging that very few businesses are being rejected for grants in Moray
 - d. Tourism industry wanting to get back to normal but could be in more danger opening than closing with social distancing in place
 - e. Positive outcome for grant applicants now receiving their money
 - f. There have not been any enquiries from PACE. However, SDS anticipate demand going forward and set up scheme with a local approach in mind. Further details of MyWorldofWork to be circulated separately to promote online materials and share with community
 - g. Many new companies, directors and partnerships are still falling through the gaps but new £45M Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund will hopefully alleviate situation.
 - h. There will be a new £34m fund launched on **Thursday 30 April 2020** across Scotland – the Newly self-employed hardship fund. Those eligible will have become self-employed on/after 6 April 2019 to end March 2020 (i.e. did not submit a tax return including income from self-employment for 2018-19). Made up of £2k grants the fund in Moray will be administered by Economic Development within Moray Council (BG is part of this team). It is for those who trade as self-employed, not as a limited company or partnership. Eligibility criteria will be flexible and we are anticipating high volume of applicants. Additional staff will be deployed to ensure the application process is clear and concise. The application form will be available to download from the Moray Council Website when the fund goes live.
 - i. Tourism industry most likely to be worst hit in region. In 2018 over 700 people were employed in tourism in the whisky industry alone. Moray Chamber of Commerce preparing open letter to MP and MSP for action
 - j. Companies are working out their plans for restarting when restrictions ease with clear instructions and practical steps from government
 - k. Those who did not qualify for furlough applied for Universal Credit instead. However, they may now be eligible for the new funding. It could be that successful applicants have to tell DWP that they also got the hardship payment
 - l. Good uptake on BG webinars and working with Moray Chamber and Elgin BID to coordinate content and dates
4. Public Sector Update
- a. Tribute paid to Moray Council processing the grants
 - b. Specific cases of companies falling through the gaps are to be referred to MSP and Moray Council to follow up
 - c. Need to assess the bigger economic impact relating to various employee types eg. women/young/low wage groups although resilience high in the region
5. AOB
- a. Nine organisations have now been awarded communities funding with another 4 being considered with a total value of £170k paid out. Talks with tsiMORAY to be a potential anchor organisation as they can support and have processes in place to deal with applications
 - b. Rent deferral requests being looked at by HIE with individual payment plans over the course of the remaining year
 - c. Success story of an insurance company paying out

Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 30th April 2.00pm – 3.00pm