

**Moray Business Resilience Meeting**  
**Thursday 17 September 2020 (Skype call)**

**Action Points**

Attendees:

Craig Robertson – Business Gateway  
Fiona Robb - HIE  
Fraser Grieve – SWA  
Jim Grant – Moray Council  
Karen Millar – Job Centre Plus  
Karen Johnstone – Job Centre Plus  
Lewis Featch – on behalf of Richard Lochhead  
Michael O'Donnell – Moray Council  
Scott McKnockiter – HIE  
Stephen Sheridan – SDS  
Cllr Theresa Coull – Moray Council

Apologies:

David Groundwater - FSB  
Donna Harper - MBWC  
Douglas Ross - MP  
Gemma Cruickshank – Elgin BID  
Graham Leadbitter – Moray Council  
Laurie Piper – Visit Moray Speyside  
Leona Williamson – DWP  
Jane Cumming – SCDI  
Jane Munro - DWP  
Michael O'Donnell – Moray Council  
Nina Crocombe - SDS  
Richard Lochhead - MSP  
Sarah Medcraf – Moray Chamber of Commerce  
Stuart Black - HIE

1. Jim Grant opened meeting
2. Public Sector Update
  - a. Moray Council working on the economic recovery strategy and due to go to the Moray Economic Partnership at the end of the month
  - b. Business Gateway receiving lots of enquiries about reduced hours and redeployment within organisations. Looking at individual business models to see how this could work
  - c. Queries from employees on potential redundancies
  - d. Webinars hosted by BG have been fully subscribed
  - e. Digital Enablement Grant now live and a good level of interest so far, working quickly to get applications approved

- f. Hotel Support Programme has now closed and HIE are working in conjunction with SE and SSE so all applications can be dealt with Scotland wide. Any unsuccessful applications for the HSP could be looked at individually and HIE are keen to support projects through their own discretionary budget
- g. [SCVO](#) announced £25M Community & Third Sector Recovery grant separated into two strands: Adapt and Thrive Programme and Communities Recovery Fund where business has been reduced or halted due to Covid. Details have been circulated to anchor organisations supporting communities and also HIE account managed clients. HIE will not be administering the funds but client applications will be shared for account managers to comment on
- h. JCP offering ongoing courses in construction to allow trade to obtain their CSCS card
- i. Job Centres are managing a rapid response service receiving in excess of 260k queries about getting back into the workplace whilst working alongside customers
- j. Working closely with DWP in supporting youth unemployment. Hub approach is useful for youngsters
- k. DWP online jobs fair in October please circulate via online social media

### 3. Private Sector Update

- a. News of a test case decision on [business interruption insurance](#) on Tuesday which could lead to some benefiting
- b. FBS still in talks with HMT and DWP re any involvement in the Kickstart Scheme
- c. Furlough - calling on the chancellor to look at targeted extensions for sectors facing the toughest restrictions or most difficult trading conditions
- d. Getting ready for transition- work on this growing and questions growing
- e. FSB have a [webinar with the Home Office](#) re immigration next week. Free and open to all
- f. Across the country there seems to be some confusion on face coverings in beauty salons. A further guidance document is to follow but maybe worth reminding that beauty salons are deemed close contact retail services and a face covering is mandatory
- g. Moray Chamber have noted their expression of interest to be an intermediary for Kickstart Scheme and still awaiting confirmation but have had 46 placements noted in the first 24 hours (including the council's). Once confirmed as an intermediary, a partnership agreement will be drawn up to use between MCC and employers and market it further. Already asked employers to get a job spec drafted as it will be needed to progress (and to save time later!)
- h. Lot of anecdotal information about mental health in the workplace and sign off by Drs etc. Reaching out to larger employers first to get their views before seeing what (if anything) we can do on this
- i. MCC working with the Moray Council to get prior notification of any potential school closure due to an outbreak to be able to inform employers in advance who may need to make allowances/arrangements
- j. Still lobbying nationally to have the manufacturing social distancing guidance reduced from 2m to 1m but with rising Covid cases this isn't likely to happen by 1<sup>st</sup> October
- k. Lobbying for the reopening of offices
- l. Generally businesses are either very busy (trades/home improvement companies) or have no consistency with some hotels sighting 20% occupancy on a Monday morning but then look back on Friday and they've ended up 80% all week, hard to plan for this
- m. Lots of requests for VAT reduction to 5% to be extended
- n. Most employers don't want furlough to continue as feels its prolonging the problem
- o. Check and Protect App 71 businesses signed up and over 18,000 check ins
- p. [Virtual PACE event](#) announced by SDS for 22<sup>nd</sup> September. Free to sign up
- q. Noted impact of Test and Protect on businesses

r. Hospitality industry facing challenges with bookings dropping off

4. AOB

- a. The 'two whisky distance' is getting good traction, if anyone knows where a good place to have two cardboard barrels as a sign, please let SM know
- b. Suggest moving meetings to fortnightly - all agreed

**Date and time of next meeting**

**Thursday 1st October 2.00pm – 3.00pm**