

**MINUTE OF MORAY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP**  
**THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2015, 10AM – 12NOON**  
**FORSYTHS, STATION STREET, ROTHES, AB38 7AD**

**Attendees**

|                                 |       |                                  |
|---------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| Richard Forsyth Jnr             | Host  | Forsyths                         |
| Councillor John Cowe (JC)       | Chair | The Moray Council                |
| Gordon Sutherland (GS)          |       | The Moray Council                |
| Jackie McLaren (JM)             |       | tsiMoray                         |
| Frank Hughes (FH)               |       | Moray College UHI                |
| Rhona Gunn (RG)                 |       | The Moray Council                |
| Jim Grant (JG)                  |       | The Moray Council                |
| Dawn McNiven (DM)               |       | Platform PR                      |
| Margery McLennan (MM)           |       | Chamber of Commerce              |
| Francis Webster (FW)            |       | Skills Development Scotland(SDS) |
| Rowena MacDougall (RM)          |       | The Moray Council                |
| David Oxley (DO)                |       | HIE                              |
| Jane Cumming (JACU)             |       | Platform PR                      |
| Joanne Chisholm (mins)<br>(JMC) |       | The Moray Council                |

**1. Welcome & Intro from Forsyth's Host**

JC thanked all for coming and passed over to Richard Forsyth. Richard went through a slideshow and talked about the history of Forsyth's and the type of work that they do. Forsyth's and Son's started in 1933 and the business expanded in the 70's. They are Coppersmiths and repair and maintain thin copper and now also do work for the Oil and Gas sector. They have premises in Rothes and Buckie and export to 30 countries. Forsyth's are now a recognised brand overseas and their main competitors are in Germany and America.

JC Thanked Richard for his presentation and said how Forsyth's are an iconic moray family firm.

JC asked for an update from David Oxley before moving on. DO advised that 2 companies had entered into administration this week (Accunostics and Mackellars (MacKellar Sub-Sea Ltd, MacKellar Trittech Ltd and Trittech Nairn Ltd ) as well as retail businesses such as Homebase and Covesea Tea Room. As a result there are around 100 people in Moray that could be without a job. SDS has activated the PACE team and with Job Centre Plus have an event set up on 9 March 2015 for any information and guidelines on helping to get into work, money advice, etc.

## **2. Apologies**

James Johnston, Vice Chair, Moray Economic Partnership; Ranald Robertson, Hitrans; Fabio Villani, TSI Moray; Murray Ferguson (CNPA).

## **3. Meeting Note & Actions from meeting of 11 December 2014**

JC advised that after the Wildbird projection event in Elgin High Street the shops doubled in footfall. MM has a meeting on Tuesday regarding the Malt Whisky Trail and the launch date for Culture Conference is 26 March 2015. Launch for Tourism Summit is 31 March 2015.

JC referred to page 8 and advised the A96 should be the A95.

## **4. Spaceport Update**

DO, JG, GS and Andrew Anderson & David Livingstone went to the 'Shaping the Future of the UK Space Economy' Space Conference in London to raise the profile of Moray and Kinloss. 84 people attended including 5 from MEP plus 2 others from HIE. Useful contacts were made with Qinetiq (Defence Evaluation and Research potential spaceport Operator) and the MET Office (to provide data why Kinloss is a better site). There is another Space Conference planned for the end of March and the biggest space conference to date will be in July 2015.

The location of the spaceport is a decision for the UK Government. Discussions are being sought with MP's in Westminster and stakeholder government departments including those with a regional interest and national influence. There were reps at conference for Cornwall but none from any other of the selected sites.

GS advised local engagement have been made with local Community Councils and are all aware of and supportive of pursuing the Moray bid.

Going forward the spaceport working group will be looking for support and information from the other MEP programme groups. For example information to provide details on hotel, tourism/culture and transportation to give us as much information for the best opportunity for bid.

MM advised she has an intern starting and will gather information on the study business facilities available.

JACU to look at condensing the Briefing paper into bit sized key messages to help with engagement. GS advised Spaceport documents can be viewed and uploaded

to –

<http://www.yourmoray.org.uk/PartnershipGroups/MorayEconomicPartnership/SpaceportWorkingGroup.htm>

It doesn't look like there will be a decision on a preferred shortlist before the general election

MM advised there are high calibre film makers resident in Moray that could be asked to help produce promotional materials to support a spaceport bid.

## **5. Communications Report**

JACU circulated Public Relations Activities and read through.

6 December 2014 to 13 Feb 2015 - Coverage

- Spaceport
- World Host training
- Moray Christmas
- Wildbird
- Business start-up and population growth

Potential future stories

- Spaceport ongoing
- Macbeth film opportunity
- Family firms story
- Health Science A96 corridor

Support for other initiatives

- The Real Macbeth – encouraging Alan Cumming documentary
- The Real Macbeth – encouraging tourism sector to capitalise on new film (release date put back.)
- Food and drink – video/photography courses
- Have a very Moray Christmas – building on success of advent calendar card
- A95 upgrade lobby

- Culture Strategy launch
- Gamejam support to Moray College UHI
- Tourism – support for various initiatives.

The Board discussed opportunities around promoting Moray through the Scotland Year of Food & Drink – highlighting what is going on this year in Moray.

MM advised Seafest Food Fayre is on 11 July 2015 and Moray Speyside will be at the Visit Scotland's Expo Exhibition in Aberdeen 22/23 April joined by Johnstons Cashmere and Craigellachie Hotel.

Moray Speyside looking at promotion of "Made in Moray", Cycling, Coast and Heritage/towns and villages brochures for the 2015 tourist season.

FH advised that Jacqui Taylor is organising Food and Drink Manufacturing event on 26 March 2015. GS suggested MEP partners should raise awareness together for the whisky festival, food and drink events and that local brewers had plans to hold Moray Oktoberfest again this year in Elgin Town Hall. Members to send Platform PR details of Food and Drink events in 2015 so that they can prepare a media release publicising planned events.

JACU circulated MEP Key Messages Paper.

MEP Key Messages

**MEP is harnessing the combined forces of the public, private and voluntary sectors to strengthen and diversify the Moray economy.**

**We want to build on our strengths in food, drink and engineering, but also create jobs and opportunities in new sectors such as life sciences and offshore renewables.**

**With a vibrant and dynamic economy and culture, we want to attract young people to live and work in Moray**

**Moray offers a great deal for tourists from dolphins to whisky, surfing to woodland walks and MEP aims to expand the tourism sector and increase the availability of accommodation.**

## **6. MEP and the Budgeting Process**

RG advised that this was touched on the previous meeting but would like to expand and speak about the MEP budget.

RG outlined the background to the proposal that MEP take a role in management of the Council's core economic development budget. She described the Agreement between Cosla and the Scottish Government entered into in 2013 which was circulated, in terms of which expectations were placed on all community planning partners to draw upon the totality and breadth of their resources in order to improve outcomes for communities. Key objectives were to:

- Ensure the SOA was the focal point of planning and deployment of resources
- Share budget, investment and resource planning information through the Community Planning Partnership at an early stage including setting broad financial parameters being worked to, key milestones and how resources support SOA delivery
- Achieve real deployment and alignment of resources between partners
- Put in place related governance to underpin this joint approach to resourcing the SOA

This agreement had been considered at the Community Planning Board in January 2014 and the Community Planning Officers Group formed to help drive that forward at a strategic level. Work was currently ongoing across all 5 partnerships to try to identify resources (including staff, financial resources and assets) being applied to relevant work across community planning partners with a view to ensuring these resources were not only fully aligned, but where better outcomes could result to also move forward to pooling resources and applying them to a shared objective. Much of that work was currently focussed on putting together a Prevention Plan. That process would by definition involve looking at areas where it was agreed aligned resources were not working to best effect and instead agreeing to pool those resources and redirect them to preventative activity that met the objectives set out in Moray 2023. It was recognised that this process would involve a culture change and so would take time to achieve. It was equally clear however that the direction being given by national government was that the aspiration of shared community budgets was not an option but an expectation.

In light of this, the Council's administration was keen to set up a small test of change or pilot with part of the Council's economic development budget if members of MEP were supportive of this. MEP was seen as an ideal pilot body because it was one of the most mature partnerships, it came into being as an expression of community will rather than because of a statutory requirement, collaboration and alignment were already being seen to work well within MEP, MEP held considerable expertise in the area of economic development and there was already some evidence of a willingness to create pooled budgets in that MEP members created the budget for PR promotion of its activities. This pilot could start in a very gradual way. So for example MEP, could initially act as a consultee in relation to an events budget identified for annual bids. Initially this budget would be supplied only by the Council but over time, if the pilot was viewed to be working well, this could be extended to

include events funding from other partners, and ultimately to a broader budgetary involvement. It was recognised that there were some prerequisites to such a pilot working including a robust overarching strategy which would include a refreshed MES, a simple governance structure, clarity about roles and responsibilities and a consistent message throughout partner agencies.

JG then went on to describe the way in which the core economic development budget was currently applied and a method by which an events budget could be carved out and managed.

Members of MEP were then asked to share their views on the proposal. DO indicated that the HIE budget was managed in such a way that he could not contribute to a shared budget, not least because his budget varied annually, was managed across an area larger than Moray and according to criteria which were not necessarily the same as those the Council used. He could not see how the approach outlined could add to the good work already being done across MEP in working together and aligning budgets where this met MES objectives. Equally, he was not aware of a shared aspiration for pooled budgets at senior or national level as outlined by RG. FH indicated that he had similar concerns to DO and in particular did not believe that this message had been promoted at Community Planning Board level. FW and MM felt the same, it being noted that although one represented a national organisation and another a local organisation, they each had difficulty in seeing how a shared budget would work in practice, and were also concerned that pooled budgets might create conflicts of interest which undermined the excellent working relationships established within MEP to date. There was also unease about whether this was a responsibility which it was appropriate to pass to MEP.

After further discussion, it being clear that MEP members were not currently supportive of the proposal, and as it appeared there may have been some miscommunication about the aspirations the Community Planning Board and its partnerships were working towards, RG indicated that she would take the comments made back to the Council for consideration.

## **7. Town Centre Health Checks**

RM explained that Moray Council undertake Town Centre Health Checks (TCHC) every two years, the most recent being summer 2014. The TCHC has been taken to Planning Committee and the Economic Development Committee who have agreed to publish results and use the report as a material consideration in determination of planning applications. Committee have also requested that community groups be used to undertake survey work and for this to be more frequent. Report is available on the Council's website.

Generally the 2014 findings have shown that Elgin, Buckie and Lossiemouth have shown weaker signs of vitality and viability compared to 2012. This has mainly been seen through an increase in shop vacancies and a drop in pedestrian footfall at some of the count locations. Findings in Edgar Road, Forres and Keith are more encouraging with improved signs of vitality and viability recorded. The smaller settlements of Aberlour, Dufftown and Fochabers have also encouraging results with very low levels of vacancies and in some cases no vacancies recorded. Rothes has also been relatively stable with the same number of vacancies recorded as 2012.

## **8. Partner updates**

Elgin Charrette will start on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2015. JG advised they are encouraging attendance and get the public involved and JG is looking to a clear action plan after this event.

Piping at Forres bid to Hold the European Pipe Band Championships 2016-2019 has been successful.

Dredger build has been commissioned by Moray Council

18<sup>th</sup> March should be the announcements from UK Govt re awards of contract for difference bidding- re offshore renewables

FH advised the Food and Drink Festival will be held on 26 March 2015 and Moray Game Jam will be 20 – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2015.

## **Future Meetings 2015**

| <b>Date/Time</b> | <b>Location</b>  |
|------------------|------------------|
| May 14 2015      | To be confirmed. |
| Sept 24 2015     | To be confirmed. |
| Dec 10 2015      | To be confirmed. |