

Moray Economic Partnership

Teams Meeting

Wednesday 26 May 2021 @ 14:00

Graham Leadbitter (Chair)	Moray Council
Andrew Anderson	tsiMoray
Andrew Stanley	HIE
David Patterson	Moray College UHI
Janette Hughes (Guest)	Moray Council
Jim Grant	Moray Council
John Cowe	Councillor, Moray Council
Kara Stewart	Moray Chamber of Commerce
Laurie Piper	Visit Moray Speyside
Michael O'Donnell	Moray Council
Rhona Gunn	Moray Council
Stephen Sheridan	SDS
Kerry Williams (Minutes)	HIE

Apologies

Ewen Mackintosh	Gordon & MacPhail
Dr Jamie Hogg	NHS Grampian
Katherine Mackintosh	Robertson
Pearl Hamilton	FSB
Stuart Black	HIE
Tim Eagle	Councillor, Moray Council

1.	Welcome by Chair Welcome from Chair and apologies given.	
2.	Minutes from last meeting and matters arising Previous minutes agreed and no matters arising.	
3.	Moray Growth Deal Update The MGD update has been considered by the MGD board and there is further consultation going forwards. A significant amount of work has already been done to get to the OBC stage. The MEP is part of the MGD governance arrangement and sets out the roles of the working groups. All of the OBCs have been through rigorous reviews and MEP have the opportunity to question anything they are unsure of.	

	<p>Digital Health and Care Innovation (DHI) Centre</p> <p>Janette Hughes gave a presentation of the overarching objectives of MGD DHI Centre with particular emphasis on KPIs and targets.</p> <p>The DHI Centre will have links with other regions and will attract inward investment through UKG funding of £5M over the next 38 months. On reflection of Covid, it is hoped that the project can be accelerated to support economic recovery from OBC if the deal is delayed before the full business case is signed off. DHI will attract industry plus health and care workers to tackle the challenge and demand in Elgin with 30 to 50 jobs earmarked. The project will also contribute to the net zero targets for the Moray region.</p> <p>The centre will link with other key health innovation hubs and will use a combination of simulation and living lab testing with real people in rural community areas. JC asked whether an alternative to 'living lab' could be considered as it has connotations of animal testing. JH said they could look at an alternative phrase.</p> <p>Action: DHI project team to look at alternative phrasing for living labs.</p> <p>DHI will be involved in the ground-breaking development of the NHS Scotland colon capsule endoscopy which will reduce the need for travel, whilst increasing productivity and accessibility of data from the cloud. They will be looking at how to make things work better in the future.</p> <p>Moray Aerospace, Advanced Technology and Innovation Campus (MAATIC)</p> <p>A letter has been received from UKG to support MAATIC however, there are a few financial implications to be resolved before the full deal can be signed off. Some issues around the intended site and operations with safeguarding at RAF Lossiemouth have delayed plans. A consultant will be brought on board to find an appropriate site, facilitate the work and agree with architects the exact size and requirements of what should be included. There are budget uncertainties and additional costs arising from land purchase and aligning legal advice plus footpaths and cycle paths to be considered that were not part of the original budget.</p> <p>UKG have agreed and committed to £21M of funding for the project plus an additional £3M from HIE but additional costs may come in around £1.5M above the original budget of £24M. The project should be shovel ready to implement once the FBC has been signed off.</p>	<p>JH/DHI Team</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Economic Recovery Plan</p> <p>MO provided a summary of COVID-19 related business grants administered by local government agencies.</p> <p>The Town Centres Fund has also contributed to transforming empty space to living space, altering large empty retail units and other short-term projects are being considered to support the economic recovery of town centres.</p>	

	<p>An update of the Local Development Plan including housing completions, business developments at Enterprise Park Forres and Elgin Business Park, infrastructure and social and community support.</p> <p>Employability and skills are being assisted through the DWP Kickstart scheme although uptake for this has been regionally and nationally lower than expected. Key workers are being supported and Moray Pathways continue to provide accessibility to ICT and digital.</p> <p>Additional funding will enable VMS to directly employ staff to promote regional tourism recovery and the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund will provide a network of facilities for mobile homes.</p> <p>Small businesses can now benefit from consultancy support for Brexit and preparing of procurement bids.</p> <p>Recruitment to Community Wealth Building post is ongoing.</p> <p>A review of procurement activities across all public sector partners in Moray will seek to develop the supply chain in the region.</p> <p>Social Enterprise and Community Support will have an important role to play in the economic recovery through community asset transfers.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Indicators Update</p> <p>JG referred MEP members to the update on the KPIs to measure economic recovery in the short term. A proposal that partner organisations to gather intelligence and report at least quarterly for the 1st year initially.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Economic Strategy Refresh</p> <p>JG asked MEP to approve a review and refresh of the 2019 Moray Economic Strategy in light of changed economic conditions, namely COVID-19 and Brexit.</p> <p>Whilst many of the themes in MES still resonate as strongly as they did in 2019, COVID- 19 has created or accelerated many changes in the economy that the MES could not have foreseen and that are therefore not reflected in the MES. Some of the main issues are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The transition away from office-based work has been accelerated and, in some cases will be permanent. This creates both opportunities and threats for Moray in terms of talent attraction and infrastructure. 2. The green recovery agenda and the desire to ‘build back better’. This requires a joined-up approach between skills, business support and infrastructure to maximise the opportunities for the region. 3. The health of the private sector coming out of the pandemic. The MES focuses on helping businesses to grow and invest however in the short to medium term the private sector needs support to survive and deal with the impacts of COVID-19. 	

	<p>4. Potentially higher unemployment as a result of ongoing restrictions. This could cover a range of sectors from hospitality (no international tourists) to manufacturing (acceleration of automation to deal with future pandemics and take advantage of corporate tax breaks).</p> <p>The review and refresh would consult with partners and business to identify any other issues.</p> <p>BREXIT has permanently changed how our businesses trade in the future. The MES needs to reflect the impact on the economy and the needs of those affected.</p> <p>BREXIT has also changed the funding landscape as we move away from the European Regional Development Programme (ERDP), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the LEADER programme. These will be replaced by the UK Levelling Up Fund, UK Community Renewal Fund and UK Community Assets Fund. These funds will have different priorities than the EU funds and will bring different opportunities for investment and partnership working. The MES needs to identify opportunities where partnership working can add value.</p> <p>Although it is yet to become clear how leaving the EU will affect state aid there may be opportunities that arise from this, particularly around procurement and public sector interventions.</p> <p>Community Wealth Building (CWB) has become a priority of the Scottish Government and Moray Council are currently recruiting a CWB Officer to produce a strategy and embed this in other strategies Moray Council produces or is involved in. CWB provides an opportunity to grow the local economy and deliver inclusive growth.</p> <p>This will also be an opportunity to review the sub groups of the MEP and to realign their focus to the review and refreshed outcomes and actions. This will in turn lead to a review of the way in which the MEP agenda is framed.</p> <p>As skills and employability are key aspects of MES, the review will include a review of the Moray Skills Investment Plan which was also launched in 2019.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Moray Communications</p> <p>GL said there had been a delay and reaction to recent communications during the lifting of restrictions with a negative message sent out to rest of the country. Elgin town centre footfall dropped when it was announced that Moray would be remaining in Level 3 restrictions. It was felt the message was incorrect and damaging to businesses. The Moray Business Resilience Forum and key public sector agencies have been working together to bring the message that it is safe to travel to Moray.</p> <p>The public health message should dovetail with business organisations to promote activity, however, the capacity of the NHS communications team is pressured at the moment.</p>	

	<p>The tourism industry is showing strong bookings and will continue to promote the message locally that the region is safe and secure.</p> <p>Action: LP to continue to promote the region for the visitor sector.</p> <p>Moray Council are in the process of procuring a new media/comms contract and further communications can be tailored to bidder. The new contract will focus on promoting the live/work aspect of attracting people to Moray.</p> <p>Promoting hospitality skills and recruitment in national publications will encourage the live/work message.</p> <p>Action: MO to advise once new media contract awarded and confirm media outlets to promote region.</p>	<p>LP</p> <p>MO</p>
8.	<p>AOB</p> <p>FSB Survey PH had provided MEP with the results of a recent FSB Survey which gives a snapshot of small businesses and provides context of indicators. The sector as a whole is pessimistic about others. JG suggested repeating the survey on a quarterly basis to track change.</p> <p>Mental Health and Wellbeing KS said she will be conducting a demand survey for mental health and wellbeing events before booking paid-for events. There are lots of business owners working alone rather than in teams and it would be beneficial to have the tangible support from MCC and/or FSB.</p> <p>Oil and Gas Jobs JC raised there could potentially be 200,000 jobs lost in the area due to the demise of the oil and gas industry and we have a huge advantage to alternative renewable energy suppliers in Buckie for example. GL said the transition to renewable energy, along with other manufacturing, is crucial to ensure periods of unemployment are avoided. Early engagement is required with Richard Lochhead, in his new role as MSP for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work.</p>	<p>PH</p> <p>KS</p> <p>GL</p>
9.	<p>Date and Time of next meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 26th August 2021</p> <p>Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm</p>	